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B7-0171/2012 }
B7-0172/2012 }
B7-0173/2012 }
B7-0174/2012 }
B7-0176/2012 } RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 122(5) of the Rules of Procedure

replacing the motions by the following groups:

Verts/ALE (B7-0171/2012)

S&D (B7-0172/2012)

PPE (B7-0173/2012)

ECR (B7-0174/2012)

ALDE (B7-0176/2012)

on human rights violations in Bahrain

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on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on human rights violations in Bahrain

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions of 7 July 2011¹ on the situation in Syria, Yemen and Bahrain in the context of the situation in the Arab world and North Africa, and of 27 October 2011 on Bahrain²,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 March 2011³ on European Union relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council,
- having regard to the statements by its President of 12 April 2011 on the death of two Bahraini civil activists and of 28 April 2011 condemning the death sentences passed on four Bahrainis for participating in peaceful pro-democracy protests,
- having regard to the Hearing of 3 October 2011 on Bahrain in the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights,
- having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative (VP/HR) on Bahrain of 2011 and in particular that of 24 November 2011 on the publication of the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, the Statement by the spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton on the anniversary of the unrest in Bahrain on 13 February 2012, and the statements of 12 October 2011 by the HR/VP on the situation in Egypt, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain at the European Parliament,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on Bahrain of 21 March, 12 April and 23 May 2011,
- having regard to the statements of 23 June and 30 September 2011 by the UN Secretary-General on the lengthy sentences imposed on 21 Bahraini political activists, human rights defenders and opposition leaders, including in some cases life imprisonment, and the Statement by the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on Bahrain on 15 February 2012,
- having regard to the statement of 29 September 2011 on Bahrain by the 66th UN General Assembly,
- having regard to the press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain on 5 October 2011 and the statement issued by the Bahrain Ministry of Health on the Sentencing of Doctors, Nurses and Medics on 30 September 2011,
- having regard to the statement of 23 October 2011 by the Bahraini Public Prosecutor regarding the retrial of doctors previously prosecuted in military trials,

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0333.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA-PROV(2011)0475.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0109.

- having regard to the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry of 23 November 2011,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Arab Charter on Human Rights, to all of which Bahrain is a party,
 - having regard to Article 19(d) of Bahrain’s Constitution,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders of 2004, as updated in 2008,
 - having regard to the Human Rights Watch report of 28 February 2012,
 - having to the 1949 Geneva Convention,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas 14 February 2012 marked the first anniversary of the peaceful popular movement calling for respect for fundamental human rights and democratic reforms; whereas government authorities made arrests and prevented peaceful protestors from gathering; whereas government forces violently cracked down on protestors; whereas tear gas, stun grenades and birdshot were used in residential areas and the police reportedly broke into several houses;
- B. whereas protests continue to be violently repressed; whereas persecution, detention and torture of human rights defenders, lawyer, teachers, health workers and bloggers who took part in the peaceful pro-democracy protests continue; whereas according to human rights organisations over 100 citizens have been arbitrarily detained over the last two months;
- C. whereas the banking and tourism-based economy, already weakened by the world financial crisis, is struggling to revive;
- D. whereas on 29 January 2012, approximately 250 political prisoners began a widespread national hunger strike because 14 prominent political and human rights activists had been arbitrarily detained since March 2011;
- E. whereas since early 2012 the Bahraini authorities have denied entry to the country to international human rights organisations and journalists, and restricted visits by them, which is a serious impediment to their ability to carry out their work;
- F. whereas the BICI (Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry) report, commissioned by the King last June and published in November 2011, found that 35 people had died in last year’s unrest, including five security personnel and five detainees tortured to death while in custody; whereas the BICI’s report concluded that excessive force had been used against peaceful protesters, political activists, human rights defenders and journalists, that torture

was widespread and that many people were on trial or had been sentenced to prison terms for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly; whereas in its report, the BICI expressed the view that the trials did not comply with international standards of due process, or with Bahrain's own Criminal Code;

- G. whereas the Bahraini King has accepted the findings of the report and appointed a 19-person National Commission to oversee the implementation process; whereas the National Commission is scheduled to release its conclusions on 20 March 2012 covering the management of the police, judiciary, education and media departments; whereas King Hamad Ben Issa Al Khalifa of Bahrain has publicly pledged to undertake reforms to achieve national reconciliation;
- H. whereas following the recommendations of the BICI, Bahrain has completed the setting-up of a special investigatory unit within the public prosecution department dedicated to determining the responsibilities of those who have committed unlawful or negligent acts resulting in deaths, torture and mistreatment of civilians during the last year;
- I. whereas the implementation of the BICI recommendations remains slow; whereas a process of national dialogue for reconciliation has been initiated;
- J. whereas according to several NGO reports, unfair trials before military and civilian courts are a central element of the repression of the pro-democracy protest movement in Bahrain; whereas one of the recommendations by the BICI was that all citizens tried by military courts should have their cases reviewed by ordinary courts, but this still has not been implemented in all cases;
- K. whereas the Bahraini authorities have repeatedly stated their commitment to undertake human rights reforms and to cooperate with international human rights organisations;
- L. whereas there have been several calls for the Government of Bahrain to extend a standing invitation to the Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights Council;
- M. whereas the UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan Mendez, was supposed to visit Bahrain from 8 to 17 March 2012 but has been officially asked by the Bahraini authorities to delay his trip until after July 2012;
- N. whereas more than 4 000 people were reportedly dismissed from their jobs or expelled from university for having participated in the protests; whereas according to Bahraini trade unions more than 1 000 of them have still not been reinstated and whereas dozens of university students are still waiting to be allowed to resume their studies; whereas many of those reinstated have been pressured to sign statements in which they pledge to refrain from any trade union related activities and consent to being appointed to posts other than their original ones;
- O. whereas, on the basis of the events of the past year, Reporters Without Borders has identified Bahrain as an 'enemy of the internet';

1. Welcomes BICI's recommendations and urges the Bahraini Government to take all the necessary steps to fully and swiftly implement its recommendations in order to address the most important issues, end impunity, restore social consensus, improve human rights protection in line with international human rights standards and implement major reforms;
2. Expresses its solidarity with the victims of repression in Bahrain and their families;
3. Condemns the ongoing violation of human rights in Bahrain and urges the Bahraini authorities and security forces to stop the excessive use of violence, including the excessive use of tear gas, repression, acts of torture, unlawful detention and prosecution of peaceful protestors, and to exercise the utmost restraint when attempting to control protests; urges the authorities to act in strict accordance with their legislation and international obligations; stresses the right to a fair trial which Bahrain has signed up to;
4. Reiterates its call for the immediate and unconditional release of all peaceful demonstrators, political activists, human rights defenders, doctors and paramedics, bloggers and journalists, in particular Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, and Mahdi Abu Dheeb, President of the Bahrain Teachers' Association, who have been detained or convicted for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly or complying with their professional obligations;
5. Stresses that demonstrators have expressed their legitimate democratic aspirations and urges the Bahraini authorities to achieve the process of reconciliation within an inclusive and constructive dialogue, which is essential for the democratic stability of Bahrain's diverse society, in which the rights of each citizen should be equally guaranteed both by the letter of the law and in practice;
6. Urges the Bahraini authorities to conduct thorough, impartial and independent investigations into the human rights violations by the police and security forces and as a result of the military presence in Bahrain during and after the pro-democracy protests against peaceful protestors and citizens, to ensure accountability and prevent impunity for those responsible, regardless of position or rank, and to adopt measures to deter future human rights violations;
7. Calls on the Bahraini Government to withdraw all charges and drop all convictions handed down since February 2011 in the National Safety Courts or civilian courts based on the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, and all convictions based solely on confessions;
8. Calls on the Bahraini authorities to ensure that the authorities provide all criminal defendants with prompt and full access to legal counsel, as prescribed by Bahraini and international law, including in connection with interrogations and in preparation for trials, to investigate credible allegations of torture and ill-treatment during interrogation and to hold accountable any officials who fail to meet the requirements of ensuring a fair trial;
9. Calls on the VP/HR to hold the Bahraini Government to its promises to respect human rights, implement the necessary reforms, start independent investigations into human rights violations and ensure that those responsible are held to account, as well as to urge the

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Bahraini Government to drop all charges against doctors and medical staff and to release all those detained for participating in the peaceful pro-democracy protests;

10. Calls on the Bahraini authorities to restore and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, both online and offline, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, women's rights and gender equality, to fight discrimination and to immediately end all restrictions on access to information and communication technologies; calls on the Bahraini authorities to lift all entry restrictions for foreign journalists and international human rights organisations and to allow monitoring of the announced independent investigations into human rights violations and the implementation of the announced reforms;
11. Welcomes the setting-up of a Ministry for Human Rights and Social Development in Bahrain, and calls on that ministry to act in accordance with international human rights standards and obligations;
12. Urges the national authorities as well as the European enterprises involved to take the necessary measures to ensure the immediate reinstatement of the remaining individuals who were dismissed from their jobs;
13. Welcomes the suspension by the United States of the export of weapons, arms and other tools which can be used for the violent repression of citizens and for human rights violations and similarly calls on Member States to ensure that they abide by the European Council Common Position defining common rules governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment;
14. Reiterates its strong opposition to the use of the death penalty and urges the Bahraini authorities to declare an immediate moratorium;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of the Kingdom of Bahrain.