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Bahrain

Greens/EFA motion for resolution - debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

The European Parliament,

- Having regard to the Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), released on 23rd November 2011
- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Syria, Yemen and Bahrain in the context of the situation in the Arab World and North Africa on 7 July 2011, and of 27 October 2011 on Bahrain
- having regard to its resolution of 24 March 2011 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 against four Bahraini for participating in peaceful protests,
- having regard to the Hearing on Bahrain in the European Parliament Human Rights Subcommittee on 3 October 2011,
- having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative (VP/HR) on Bahrain of 2011 and in particular 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 by the HR/VP on the situation in Egypt, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain at the European Parliament on 12 October 2011,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on Bahrain of 23 May, 12 April, 21 March 2011,
- having regard to the statement of 23 June and 30 September 2011 by the UN Secretary-General on the sentences imposed on 21 Bahraini political activists, human rights defenders and opposition leaders, and the Statement by the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on Bahrain on 15 February 2012
- having regard to the statement on Bahrain by 66th UN General Assembly on 29 September 2011,

- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, the 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 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard the Human rights Watch report issued February 2012,
- having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas 14 February 2012 marked the first anniversary of the peaceful popular movement calling for the respect of fundamental human rights and democratic reforms; whereas nationwide protests happened to commemorate the date with casualties, mainly in the Shia communities;

B. whereas the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) in its report has documented 45 killings, 1,500 cases of arbitrary arrest, and 1,866 cases of torture since the start of the mass demonstrations on 14 February; whereas the report further concluded that the security forces systematically use torture and excessive force and calls for those responsible to be held accountable;

C. whereas despite numerous recommendations by the BICI, serious human rights violations continue to be committed as protests are still ongoing including the use of excessive force against peaceful protesters, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and ill-treatment of detainees, ongoing judicial harassment, impunity, obstacles to independent monitoring; whereas due process continues to be denied to hundreds of persons arrested for taking part in the 2011 uprising and notably human rights defenders, health workers, lawyers and teachers continue to be particularly harassed

D. whereas according to Bahraini trade unions more than 1000 people dismissed from their positions during the unrest have still not been reinstated into their jobs; whereas many of those allowed to go back have been asked to sign statements, put under pressure to give up trade union activities and be appointed in different functions from the original ones;

E. whereas on 26 November 2011 following the BICI's recommendations, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa issued a Royal Order to form a 19 member National Committee to study the recommendations of the BICI's report; whereas on 1 January 2012 the head of the National Committee Saleh Al Saleh resigned after attacks against his integrity and credibility; whereas the National Committee is supposed to issue its conclusions on 20 March 2012 including changes in the way the police, judiciary, education, media and other departments are run, payment of compensations to torture victims and the establishment of an independent ombudsman that will conduct investigations into allegations made against the police;

F. whereas the UN special rapporteur on torture, Juan Mendez was supposed to visit Bahrain from 8 to 17 March 2012 and has been officially asked by the Bahraini authorities to delay his trip until July 2012;

G. whereas in February military reinforcement was sent to the mainly Shia villages outside the capital of Manama to prevent people from gathering; whereas clashes between youth and riot police occur daily in Shiite neighbourhoods; whereas international human rights organisations have condemned the way the police are using teargas in Shia villages;

1. Expresses its grave concern that the violations of Human Rights in Bahrain continue unabated despite the very welcome establishment of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) by King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa which raised great hopes when it delivered its recommendations; Regrets that

the implementation mechanisms set up by the the Government of Bahrain, among them, a national Commission which is mandated to review the laws and procedures adopted in the wake of the February and March 2011 events, have not yet led to concrete results.

2. Recalls the authorities' obligation to comply with the international human rights instruments ratified by the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the Government of Bahrain's pledge to effectively implement the recommendations of the BICI report, especially No 1722, with regard to "the use of force, arrest, treatment of persons in custody, detention and prosecution in connection with the freedom of expression, assembly and association"

3. Calls on the Bahraini security forces and authorities to stop violence, repression, prosecution, detention and torture of peaceful demonstrators and to respect the freedom of expression and assembly and calls on the Bahraini government to enact necessary democratic reforms, encourage national reconciliation and restore social consensus in the country.

4. urges the Bahraini authorities to conduct thorough and impartial and independent investigations into the human rights violations by the Ministry of Interior, the National Security Agency, the Bahrain Defence Force, the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs, and the Public Prosecution Office and hold accountable and prosecute those responsible for serious abuses, regardless of position or rank and adopt measures to deter future violations.

5. Calls on the Bahraini authorities to withdraw all charges and drop all convictions lodged 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.

6. Reiterates its demand to the immediate and unconditional release of all peaceful demonstrators, political activists, human rights defenders, in particular Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, and Mahdi Abu Dheeb, President of the Bahrain Teachers Association, doctors and paramedics, bloggers and journalists who have been detained or convicted only for the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly

7. Calls on the HR/VP of the Commission to hold the Bahraini government to its promises and push for reforms, independent investigations into human rights violations and accountability for those responsible, as well as to urge the government to drop the cases against doctors and leaders of last year's protest movement because of unfair and politically motivated trials.

8. Calls on the authorities to restore and respect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the pluralism in the media both online and offline, freedom of expression and assembly, freedom of religion, women's rights and gender equality, fight against discrimination, and to put an end to the censorship; calls on the Bahraini authorities to lift all travel restrictions to foreign journalists and international human rights organizations.

9. Calls on the USA, United Kingdom, France and other countries to suspend all military and security-related sales and assistance to Bahrain until the government addresses the serious human rights violations resulting from the suppression of peaceful demonstrations and the unfair trials

10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and 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, the Government and Parliament of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

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