Resolution on human rights violations in Bahrain

2012/2571(RSP) - 15/03/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted with 48 votes to 0 with 1 abstention a resolution on human rights violations in Bahrain. The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA and ECR groups.

Parliament **welcomes the findings of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry** of November 2011, which found that 35 people died in last year's unrest, including five security personnel and five detainees tortured to death while in custody. The BICI's report concluded that excessive force had been used against protesters, 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.

The BICI expressed the view that the trials did neither comply with international standards of due process, nor with Bahrain's own criminal code.

Parliament calls upon the government of Bahrain 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.

Members **condemn the ongoing violation of human rights in Bahrain** and urge 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.

They **call 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 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.

Parliament 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 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.

It 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.

Furthermore, Parliament 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;

- 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;
- 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;
- 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.

Lastly, Parliament Reiterates its strong opposition to the use of the death penalty and urges the Bahraini authorities to declare an immediate moratorium.