Resolution on the human rights situation in Bahrain

2013/2830(RSP) - 12/09/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 39 votes to 0 with 7 abstentions a resolution on the situation in Bahrain. The resolution was tabled by the Greens/EFA, EPP, ALDE, and S&D groups. It calls on the Bahraini authorities to **respect human rights and fundamental freedoms,** and calls for a lifting of the ban on the right to peaceful demonstrations and free assembly in the capital, Manama. Members recall that, ahead of the peaceful protest planned in Manama on 14 August 2013, the King of Bahrain ordered the implementation of recommendations passed by the Parliament, which include the banning of all sit-ins, assemblies and protests in the capital, further limitations on social media activities, an increase in the detention period and withdrawal of the citizenship of anyone found guilty of committing or inciting an act of terrorism.

Whilst recognising steps taken to implement the **recommendations by the Bahraini Independent Commission of Inquiry**, Parliament stresses that more must be done to improve the human rights situation in the country. It recommends that the UN Human Rights Council's 24th Session set up a monitoring mechanism mandated to follow the implementation of the BICI recommendations and the overall resolution of the human rights situation in Bahrain.

Members regrets the **weak EU response to the situation in Bahrain** and calls on the HR/VP to condemn the ongoing violations of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to impose **targeted restrictive measures** (visa bans and asset freezes) against those individuals responsible for the human rights abuses (as documented by the BICI report). They want the VP/HR and the Member States to:

- work together to develop a clear strategy as to how the EU will, both publicly and privately, actively **push for the release of prisoners of conscience**, and

- ensure the **adoption of Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on the human rights situation in Bahrain,** which should include a specific call for the immediate and unconditional release of those prisoners;

Parliament regrets that the visit of the **Special Rapporteur on torture was again postponed**, and calls upon the Bahraini authorities to facilitate visits of the Special Rapporteurs on freedom of association and assembly and on the situation of human rights defenders.

In sum, Bahrain is called upon to

- put an immediate end to all acts of repression, including judicial harassment;

- guarantee due process, and the independence and impartiality of the judiciary in Bahrain, and to ensure that it acts in full accordance with international human rights standards;

- ensure that **independent investigations be conducted into all allegations of torture** and other ill- treatment, and that the results be made public;

- respect the rights of juveniles, and to refrain from detaining them in adult facilities.

Lastly, Parliament welcomes the decision by the Arab League to set up an Arab Human Rights Court in Manama and expresses its hope that it may act as a catalyst for human rights across the region.