Resolution on Bahrain, in particular the cases of Nabeel Rajab, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja and Ibrahim Sharif

2014/2553(RSP) - 06/02/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 48 votes to 0 with 7 abstentions a resolution on Bahrain and in particular the cases of Nabeel Rajab, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja and Ibrahim Sharif.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Greens/EFA and ALDE groups.

It condemned all human rights violations in Bahrain and called for the **immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience,** political activists, journalists, human rights defenders and peaceful protesters, including Nabeel Rajab, Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, Ibrahim Sharif, Naji Fateel, and Zainab Al-Khawaja. Members expressed grave concern regarding the Bahraini authorities' treatment of Nabeel Rajab, in addition to their refusal to grant him the early release for which he is eligible in accordance with the law. It was recalled that Nabeel Rajab, the President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) and Deputy Secretary General of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), was convicted to three years in prison in August 2012 on charges of calling for and participating in 'illegal gatherings' and ' disturbing public order' between February and March 2011. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention had described the detention of Mr as arbitrary. It was also recalled that on 22 June 2011, Abdulhadi-al-Khawaja, founder of the BCHR and regional coordinator of Front Line Defenders, who has Danish nationality, and Ibrahim Sharif, Secretary General of the National Democratic Action Society, were sentenced to life in prison by a special military court.

Parliament opposed the creation and use of special courts or the use of military courts to try national security crimes. It called on the VP/HR and Member States to work together to develop a clear strategy **setting out how the EU would, both publicly and privately, actively push for the release of the imprisoned activists and prisoners of conscience**. The VP/HR was asked to work with Member States to ensure the adoption of the Foreign Affairs **Council conclusions on the human rights situation in Bahrain**, which should include a specific call for the immediate and unconditional release of the imprisoned activists.

Members noted that there was no solution other than a Bahraini one based on compromises and mutual trust. They welcomed Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's decision to hold talks on 15 January 2014 with leaders of the five main opposition groupings and looked forward to the resumption of the National Consensus Dialogue, hoping that this step would set the ground for sustainable reforms towards the national reconciliation of Bahraini society. They called on the Government of Bahrain to take all necessary steps to guarantee due process and the independence and impartiality of the judiciary in Bahrain, and to ensure that it acted in full accordance with international human rights standards. Parliament called for **the adoption by the Council of appropriate measures in the event of the reform process being discontinued or a deteriorating human rights situation.**

Lastly, Parliament encouraged the UN to organise a prompt visit by the three Special Rapporteurs on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, on torture and on the independence of judges and lawyers.