

Resolution on human rights violations in Bangladesh

2014/2834(RSP) - 18/09/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on human rights violations in Bangladesh.

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

RAB: whilst commending the Government of Bangladesh for the progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals under difficult domestic circumstances, Parliament expressed **concern about continuing human rights violations by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB)**, created 10 years ago as an emergency measure to counter security threats from militant groups, but allegedly responsible for some 800 deaths, without any prosecution or punishment of the officers accountable. The Bangladeshi government was urged to bring the police and the RAB back within the bounds of the law, and put an end to the RAB's impunity by ordering investigations and prosecutions in respect of alleged illegal killings by RAB forces. Parliament would closely monitor the proceedings in the Narayanganj murder case, in connection with which three RAB officers had been arrested following the killing of seven people in Narayanganj in April 2014.

Labour law: Members called on the Government to ensure the enforcement of labour laws and urged further reform to bring them into line with ILO standards, since the **Labour Act of 2013 continued to fall short of international standards** with regard to freedom of association. They noted that workers continue to report harassment and intimidation intended to stop them joining or forming unions, and acts of violence against trade union organisers continued to be reported.

Draft NGO law: Parliament recalled that the Bangladeshi government had proposed a new draft Foreign Donations Regulation Act that would regulate operations and funding for any group in receipt of foreign funding, and give the NGO Affairs Office within the Prime Minister's Office approval authority over foreign-funded projects. It noted that widespread concern among NGOs that the act would involve more government officers in the process as monitors, evaluators and approvers – with the potential for delays and malpractice.

Rana Plaza: noting that the Donor Trust Fund set up by the Rana Plaza Coordination Committee to help victims and survivors had not yet reached its target of USD 40 million, with USD 23 million outstanding as at June 2014, Parliament concluded that the voluntary principle had failed the victims of the Rana Plaza disaster and that **a mandatory mechanism was urgently needed**.

It also took note of the **reform programmes in the garment industry**, setting up a regime for the inspection of more than 3 500 garment factories for structural integrity and fire and electrical safety. However, while the inspections carried out through the Western retailers had been ongoing and public, those carried out through the Government of Bangladesh had not yet been made public, and Parliament asked for full implementation of the programme including the recruitment and training of inspectors and thorough inspections, with public records, of its many thousands of factories.