Resolution on the human rights situation in Bahrain, notably the case of Nabeel Rajab

2018/2755(RSP) - 14/06/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 479 votes to 97 with 58 abstentions, a resolution on the human rights situation in Bahrain, notably the case of Nabeel Rajab.

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

Parliament called for the **immediate release** of all those detained solely for their peaceful human rights and political activities, and in particular of leading human rights defender Nabeel Rajab who was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment in relation to tweets he posted on alleged torture in Bahrain's Jaw prison and the Saudi Arabia-led coalition air strikes in Yemen, on charges based on provisions that **criminalise the right to freedom of expression**. He is just one of a number of individuals to be subjected to arbitrary detention and prosecution for exercising freedom of expression and assembly. Parliament noted the harsh conditions of Mr Rajab's imprisonment and his deteriorating health and it deplored the poor prison conditions in the country and the **use of torture** by Bahraini security and prison personnel.

Members called for an **end to all acts of violence**, harassment, intimidation, and censorship of human rights defenders, political opponents, protesters, civil society actors and their relatives within and outside the country by the state authorities, security forces and services. They noted that Bahrain has resumed the **trial of civilians before military courts**, following a constitutional amendment adopted in April 2017, and they called on the authorities to amend the constitution to put an end to the use of military trials to try civilians.

The Bahraini Government was reminded of its responsibility to ensure the security and safety of all citizens irrespective of their political views, affiliation or confession and asked to abide by its **international obligations and commitments** to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Bahrain was asked to cooperate with the **UN Special Rapporteurs** (notably on torture, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion and belief, independence of judges and lawyers, and human rights defenders) and to issue a standing invitation in their favour.

Parliament condemned the **attacks on opposition voices and civil society** in Bahrain, including the suspension of opposition society Al-Wefaq, the dissolution of the opposition group Waad and the banning of the members of these dissolved groups from participating in the **forthcoming elections** to the Council of Representatives scheduled for October 2018. Members encouraged the Government of Bahrain to aim for stability through reforms and inclusive reconciliation in an environment in which legitimate and peaceful political grievances can be expressed freely.

Parliament went on to strongly condemn the **high number of death sentences** passed in the country, noting that there has been a significant increase in executions and death sentencing following the breaking of a seven-year moratorium in February 2017, amid continued allegations of torture and ill-treatment. It called for an official moratorium on all executions and for a review of all death sentences to ensure that the trials in question adhered to international standards.

Parliament called on the HR/VP, EU institutions and Member States to systematically raise the concerns about the violation of human rights in Bahrain and to **consider the introduction of targeted measures** against those responsible for grave human rights violations.

It called on all EU Member States to strictly observe the **EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports,** and in particular to halt all transfers of weapons, surveillance and intelligence equipment and material that can be used by Bahrain in its ongoing crackdown on human rights. Members regretted the fact that **surveillance technologies** are being exported by European companies to Bahrain, and emphasised the need for the EU export control authorities to take human rights criteria into account before granting an export licence to a third country.

Lastly, Members called on the Bahraini authorities to allow an **official delegation** of Members of the European Parliament to visit the country on mission, with the aim of meeting with public authorities and civil society representatives.