

## **P7\_TA-PROV(2011)0475**

### **Bahrain**

#### **European Parliament resolution of 27 October 2011 on Bahrain**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria, Yemen and Bahrain, in particular that of 7 April 2011<sup>1</sup> on the situation in Syria, Bahrain and Yemen and that of 7 July 2011<sup>2</sup> on the situation in Syria, Yemen and Bahrain in the context of the situation in the Arab World and North Africa,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 March 2011<sup>3</sup> on European Union relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council,
- having regard to the statements by its President of 12 April 2011 on the death of two Bahraini civic activists and of 28 April 2011 condemning the death sentences handed down to four Bahrainis for participating in peaceful protests,
- having regard to the Hearing on Bahrain in the European Parliament Human Rights Subcommittee on 3 October 2011,
- having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative (VP/HR) on Bahrain of 10, 12 and 18 March 2011; 3 May and 1 July 2011; 31 August 2011 and 8 and 30 September 2011, and the statements by the VP/HR on the situation in Egypt, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain at the European Parliament on 12 October 2011,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on Bahrain of 23 May, 12 April and 21 March 2011,
- having regard to the statements of 23 June and 30 September 2011 by the UN Secretary-General on the sentences imposed on 21 Bahraini political activists, human rights defenders and opposition leaders,
- having regard to the statement on Bahrain issued by the 66th UN General Assembly on 29 September 2011,
- having regard to the press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain on 5 October 2011 and the statement issued by the Bahrain Ministry of Health on the Sentencing of Doctors, Nurses and Medics on 30 September 2011,
- having regard to the statement by the Bahraini Public Prosecutor regarding the retrial of doctors previously prosecuted in military trials issued on 23 October 2011,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, the

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2011)0148.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2011)0333.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2011)0109.

Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Arab Charter on Human Rights, to all of which Bahrain is a party,

- having regard to Article 19(d) of Bahrain’s Constitution,
  - having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders of 2004, as updated in 2008,
  - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
  - having regard to the 1949 Geneva Convention,
  - having regard to the Human Rights Watch report issued in February 2010,
  - having regard to the public briefing paper by doctors, ‘Health Services paralyzed: Bahrain’s military crackdown on patients on April 2011’,
  - having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, inspired by popular movements in North Africa and the Middle East, peaceful pro-democracy protests have occurred regularly in Bahrain since February calling for institutional, political, economic and social reforms, aimed at achieving genuine democracy, fighting corruption and nepotism, ensuring respect for the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, reducing social inequalities and creating better economic and social conditions; whereas these peaceful demonstrations were crushed with excessive use of force by the Bahraini authorities, killing dozens of protestors, and whereas the international community’s reaction was too slow and weak;
- B. whereas, following a request from the Bahraini Government, thousands of foreign forces from Saudi Arabia and the UAE under the banner of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have been deployed in Bahrain;
- C. whereas at least 20 doctors and paramedics, who had been sentenced to between five and 15 years in prison for alleged antigovernment activities while performing their professional duties and acting in accordance with their ethical code in treating injured protesters equally and without discrimination earlier this year, had their sentences reconfirmed by a military tribunal on 29 September 2011; whereas due to international pressure Bahrain’s Attorney-General, Ali Alboainain, announced on Wednesday 5 October 2011 that the 20 should be retried before civil courts, which trials resumed on 23 October 2011;
- D. whereas a number of the doctors sentenced were trained in EU Member States, belong to EU-based professional medical organisations and enjoy a good reputation among international colleagues;
- E. whereas the targeted crackdown on doctors and paramedics has serious implications for the work of international humanitarian organisations; whereas the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned the takeover by security forces of medical facilities and arbitrary arrests and ill-treatment of medical personnel as shocking and illegal;
- F. whereas on 6 September 2011 the military-run National Safety Appeal Court confirmed the sentences against at least 21 prominent Bahraini human rights activists and opponents of the regime, including bloggers and human rights activists Dr Abduljalil Al-Singace and

Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, all civilians, reportedly for plotting to overthrow the government; whereas approximately 60 civilians have been tried in Courts of National Safety this year;

- G. whereas many other political activists, human rights defenders and journalists were detained during the recent pro-reform protests; whereas according to human rights organisations they have been tortured, ill-treated and harassed by security forces;
- H. whereas the Deputy Secretary General of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Nabeel Rajab, President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, was prevented from leaving the country and remains under threat and harassment by the security forces;
- I. whereas the former Vice-President of the Bahrain Teachers' Association, Jalila al-Salman, was arrested for the second time at her home on 18 October 2011; whereas on 23 September 2011, 16 women and four girls were detained and accused of 'illegal public gathering', rioting and 'incitement to hatred of the regime';
- J. whereas on 22 May, the death sentences imposed on Ali 'Abdullah Hassan al-Sankis and 'Abdulaziz 'Abdulridha Ibrahim Hussain, accused of killing two policemen during anti-government protests in Bahrain, were upheld by the National Safety Court of Appeal; whereas the case of the two men was referred on appeal to Bahrain's Court of Cassation, whose verdict is scheduled for 28 November 2011;
- K. whereas hundreds of people, including teachers and medical professionals, were fired, arrested or charged with false offences in mass trials before military courts following the protests and many of them have not been reinstated after being sacked for supporting the protests, despite the King's pledge that most of them would be;
- L. whereas more than 40 people have now been killed since anti-government protests began, including Ahmed al-Jaber al-Qatan, allegedly shot while participating in an anti-government protest on 6 October 2011 near the capital Manama, an investigation into which has now been initiated;
- M. whereas the state of national safety in Bahrain was lifted on 1 June 2011 and on 2 July 2011 King Hamad Bin Isa al-Khalifa launched a National Dialogue to address the concerns of Bahraini citizens in the wake of recent events; whereas recommendations resulting from the Dialogue have been handed over to the King;
- N. whereas on 29 June 2011 the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), including an international independent component, was set up by King Hamad in order to investigate the grave human rights violations during recent government crackdowns on pro-reform protesters, which will deliver its findings on 23 November 2011;
- O. whereas on 24 September 2011, elections to the lower house of the parliament took place in order to fill 18 seats vacated by Al-Wefaq, an opposition party, which pulled out of the Middle Eastern nation's legislature to protest against the treatment of demonstrators during unrest earlier this year;
- 1. Condemns the repression of citizens in Bahrain which led to dozens of deaths and injuries and urges the immediate and unconditional release of all peaceful demonstrators, political activists, human rights defenders, doctors and paramedics, bloggers and journalists and expresses its solidarity with the families of all the victims;

2. Calls on the Bahraini security forces and authorities to stop violence, repression and detention of peaceful demonstrators and to show the utmost restraint when attempting to control protests; urges the authorities to act in strict accordance with their legislation and international obligations;
3. Reiterates its view that demonstrators have expressed their legitimate democratic aspirations and calls on the Bahraini Government to engage in a genuine, meaningful and constructive dialogue with the opposition, without further delay or additional preconditions, in order to bring about the necessary reforms, encourage national reconciliation and restore social consensus in the country;
4. Expresses its grave concern at the presence of foreign troops under the GCC banner in Bahrain and calls for their immediate withdrawal; reiterates its call on the GCC to contribute constructively and mediate in the interest of peaceful reforms in Bahrain;
5. Condemns the use of special military courts to try civilians, as it is a violation of international fair trial standards, and stresses that civilians must be tried in civilian courts and that every detained person deserves a fair trial, with adequate access to a lawyer and sufficient time to prepare a defence; calls for an immediate cessation of mass trials of civilians in the military court, the Court of National Safety;
6. Welcomes the decision to retry doctors and nurses in civil courts but considers that all charges against them should be dropped, and calls on the civil courts to release the doctors and medical staff unconditionally and immediately, as they were acting in accordance with their professional duty and have been accused of tending to the medical needs of those who oppose the regime, as well as of serious criminal offences which seem to be of a political nature and for which credible evidence has not been put forward, as well as to release all other political activists, journalists, teachers, bloggers and human rights defenders due to the arbitrary nature of the charges and of the entire proceedings; expresses its strong concern about the life sentences handed down to at least eight opposition activists and at least 13 people who were sentenced to up to 15 years in prison;
7. Underlines that providing impartial treatment for the wounded is a basic legal obligation under humanitarian law, and urges Bahrain, as a party to the Geneva Conventions, to respect its obligations regarding the provision of health care to the sick and injured;
8. Calls on the Kingdom of Bahrain to allow all medics to resume their jobs and allow all medics and their defence teams access to the medical examination reports from the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry's examination of the detained doctors;
9. Cautions against the abuse of national security laws;
10. Calls on the authorities to restore and respect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including pluralism in the media, both online and offline, freedom of expression and assembly, freedom of religion, women's rights and gender equality, and measures against discrimination, and to put an end to the censorship; calls on the Bahraini authorities to accept the requested visit by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;
11. Notes that thousands of employees have lost their jobs for their participation in the peaceful anti-government protests; calls on the national authorities as well as the European enterprises involved to order the immediate reinstatement of these individuals and to ensure

that they are compensated for their lost income;

12. Takes positive note of King Hamad's decision to set up an independent commission to investigate the human rights violations by the security forces during the government crackdown on peaceful pro-reform protesters; urges full impartiality and transparency for the commission and calls on the Bahraini Government not to interfere in its work and to ensure that perpetrators of crimes and all persons responsible for the violent crackdown are brought to justice and tried by due process;
13. Welcomes the setting-up of a Ministry for Human Rights and Social Development in Bahrain, and calls on that ministry to act in accordance with international human rights standards and obligations;
14. Calls for the admission of international observers to the trials of political prisoners as well as for them to be allowed to monitor the work of the independent commission investigating human rights violations to ensure objectivity according to international standards;
15. Calls on the Bahraini authorities and the King of Bahrain to commute the death sentences of Ali 'Abdullah Hassan al-Sankis and 'Abdulaziz 'Abdulridha Ibrahim Hussain; reiterates its strong opposition to the use of the death penalty and urges the Bahraini authorities to declare an immediate moratorium;
16. Considers that the investigation which has been launched into the death of a 16-year-old boy, Ahmed al-Jaber al-Qatan, during an anti-government protest must be independent, that the findings must be made public and that those responsible must be brought to justice;
17. Underlines the importance of reconciliation as an essential part of reform and stability in Bahrain's diverse society in which the rights of each citizen should be equally guaranteed in both the letter and the practice of the law;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of the Kingdom of Bahrain.