

Ana Gomes (S&D). – Mr President, the Arab Spring continues to flourish in the blood of all those who are falling from the bullets of the oppressive regimes of Bahrain, Yemen, Syria and, I must say, the armed forces of Egypt. However, as much as it flourishes in the brave men and women – like Tawakul Karman – who continue to rise up and fight against these oppressive regimes, it is our duty to understand this is not going to happen overnight. We have to support these people, show our solidarity and actively support them in many ways. We have to demand accountability; demand that our own governments do not continue to export weapons and other repressive instruments to these regimes and we have to find clever ways to mobilise and support the civil society that has been so brave.

We must do everything we can to make sure that these people hear our cry of solidarity. That can be done in many ways so that, together with the liberation of Gilad Shalit, the Arab Spring will bring about the liberation of all those Syrians, Bahrainis, Palestinians, Egyptians and Yemenis who are in jail.

We cannot conceal the fact that the regime of Saudi Arabia has tremendous responsibility in what is happening both in Bahrain and in Yemen. We need to also demand this kind of accountability from our own governments as regards relations with Saudi Arabia.