

**Question for written answer E-002750/2025**

**to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**

Rule 144

**Yannis Maniatis (S&D)**

Subject: Terrorist attack on the Church of the Prophet Elias in Damascus

On Sunday 22 June 2025, a terrorist attack on the Greek Orthodox Church of the Prophet Elias in Damascus left 22 worshippers dead and many more injured. The jihadist past of Ahmed al-Sharaa, Syria's president for the transitional period, as well as his previous relations with Al-Qaeda and ISIS remain a source of concern. This attack is not the first on Christian populations in Syria since the regime was overthrown last December.

Given that Syria has historically consisted of a mosaic of religious and ethnic communities, and bearing in mind that on 28 May 2025 the European Union lifted sanctions on Syria, but without this decision being – and nor can it be – considered as a 'blank cheque' for the new regime, will the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy say:

1. How does she ensure that the conditions set out, such as respect for international law and the protection of Syria's religious and ethnic minorities, are complied with?
2. Has the European Union raised the issue of the new Syrian regime's protection of ethnic and religious minorities? If so, in what manner?
3. What action will she take should it become apparent that the Syrian regime does not effectively protect ethnic and religious minorities?

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