

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002721/24
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Afroditi Latinopoulou (P/E)
(2 December 2024)

Subject: Urgent need to protect the Christian community in Aleppo, Syria

Christians in Syria are currently facing persecution. The seizure of Aleppo on 30 November 2024 by jihadist extremist groups of radical Muslims, which resemble ISIS and receive Turkish support, is a sign that the ethnic cleansing of Christian populations in Syria is set to continue. In 2011, there were 150 000 Christians living in Aleppo. Today, only 20 000 to 25 000 of them remain (including many schoolchildren and students, now surrounded by ultra-religious armed murderers). Meanwhile, the EU is just standing by while a threat of genocide unfolds.

In light of this tragic situation, I would like to ask the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy the following:

1. What immediate measures will she take to protect Aleppo's threatened Christian community?
2. How does she intend to address the growing influence of jihadist groups in the region, in view of the continued support they receive from Türkiye?
3. Given that Türkiye's stance is at odds with the values and principles to which EU Member States must adhere, should the country's EU accession status not be reviewed?

Submitted: 2.12.2024

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(4 February 2025)

The fall of Assad's regime is a historic moment for the extraordinarily resilient Syrian people, who have suffered in their pursuit of dignity, freedom, and justice.

The EU's principled and firm approach proved to be right. Now an inclusive, Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political solution, in the spirit of the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 2254 ⁽¹⁾, is more urgent than ever.

In the Statement of 9 December 2024 ⁽²⁾, the EU 'urge[d] all actors to avoid any further violence... and urge[d] the protection of members of all minorities, including of Christian and other non-majority confessions.'

On 14 December 2024, in Jordan, the High Representative/Vice-President participated in an international meeting on Syria where Arab countries and other partners agreed on principles of engagement with the new authorities.

These included an inclusive political process with UN support, a government representative of all components of society, the build-up of institutions, the fight against Da'esh, accountability for crimes, and respect by all external actors of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In line with these principles, the EU considers fundamental both the protection of members of all — including ethnic and religious — minorities and their effective inclusion in the political transition.

The EU and its partners will continue to fight terrorism and remain committed to supporting the global coalition against Da'esh and other initiatives to counter violent extremism and radicalism. The EU continues to give help and particular attention to the issue of families of foreign terrorist held in camps in Northeast Syria.

Türkiye's EU accession talks remain stalled due to democratic and legal setbacks, but the EU values Türkiye as a key partner and seeks progress through constructive cooperation.

⁽¹⁾ https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2254.pdf

⁽²⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/12/09/syria-statement-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union-on-the-fall-of-the-assad-regime/>