(English version)

Question for written answer E-002821/24
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Roberto Vannacci (PfE)
(8 December 2024)

Subject: Arrest of Boualem Sansal and the need to protect fundamental values in the EU-Algeria partnership

Boualem Sansal, an internationally renowned French-Algerian writer, was arrested in Algiers, causing uproar in the international community.

His fearless writing has attracted considerable attention for its criticism of authoritarian regimes and the hazards of oppressive Islamic fundamentalist power.

According to *The New York Times* ([1]), Sansal has been accused of 'endangering the nation' with his proclamations. What is more, repression of Algerian journalists has reportedly been on the rise in recent years. Dozens of them are believed to have been imprisoned.

Sansal's detention is a threat to freedom of expression, a pillar of all democracies, and is an alarming indication of the treatment of those who express views different to those of the establishment.

The EU considers freedom of thought an essential precondition for relations with third countries and the Commission stressed its duty to protect victims of ideological and cultural repression.

Algeria is included in the EU's neighbourhood policy and has established political, economic and energy ties with the bloc. The EU-Algeria partnership gives priority to political dialogue, the rule of law and fundamental rights, among other matters.

In the light of the above, can the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy give details on what action she will take to:

1. discuss this particular case of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law;

2. call for Sansal's immediate release;

3. and incorporate in the EU-Algeria partnership dialogue measures to protect freedom of expression?

Submitted: 8.12.2024

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

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, constitutes a key element of EU-Algeria relations, as enshrined in the Association Agreement ([1]) and reinforced in the Partnership Priorities ([2]).

On this basis, the EU continues to follow developments and raise concerns on human rights issues with its Algerian counterparts, in line with commitments from both sides.

In particular, the EU addresses human rights in the framework of the EU-Algeria Association Agreement, notably in the Political, Security and Human Rights Dialogue Sub-Committee, and through regular contacts with government officials at all levels, as well as with civil society representatives in Algiers and Brussels.

These discussions include the case of the author Boualem Sansal that the EU continues to follow closely in full coordination with the French authorities as stated by the Commission on 27 November 2024 at the European Parliament ([3]).

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1 [1]https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/27/world/europe/algeria-boualem-sansal-arrest.html.
([1]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A22005A1010%2801%29
([2]) https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/03/13/eu-algeria/
([3]) https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-10-2024-11-27-ITM-016_EN.html