

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002863/24
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Per Clausen (The Left)
(11 December 2024)

Subject: Situation in Syria and protection of minorities in the country following the fall of Assad to HTS

While the world's focus was on Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) overthrowing the Assad regime, the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) began an attack on the Kurdish-controlled Manbij district.

1. Will the Vice-President/High Representative confirm that the EU condemns further fighting and that all parties, including the Kurdish minority, should be given a place at the negotiating table to ensure a peaceful transition to democracy in Syria?
2. Will the Vice-President/High Representative immediately make it clear to Türkiye that carrying out airstrikes against the Kurdish minority and civilians is completely unacceptable and that Türkiye should not be seeking territorial changes?
3. Does the Vice-President/High Representative think there is a possibility of dialogue with the various parties involved in the conflict in Syria?

Submitted: 11.12.2024

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

The High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) confirms the EU's commitment to a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned peaceful and inclusive transition with the participation of all Syrian citizens, including the Syrian Kurdish population.

The EU urges all Syrian and regional actors to exercise maximum restraint and avoid any further violence, to ensure the protection of civilians, and to uphold international law, including international humanitarian law.

Türkiye has a legitimate right and responsibility to fight against terrorism, ensuring that this is done in accordance with the rule of law, respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in full respect of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of neighbouring states.

The HR/VP evokes the European Council conclusions of 19 December 2024 ⁽¹⁾, calling for full respect for Syria's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within secure borders, in accordance with international law.

The HR/VP already expressed this position in her statement of 9 December 2024 ⁽²⁾, and clearly reiterated it in multiple international meetings, including in Aqaba on 14 December 2024 ⁽³⁾, where the international community agreed on common principles for engaging in support of a Syrian-led, Syrian owned transition.

The HR/VP also took the opportunity to underline the EU's position in her bilateral meetings with the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, and will continue to do so.

The EU stands ready to support the new phase in Syria in coordination with regional partners and others. For this, the HR/VP is in close contact with her counterparts in the region.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/jhlehaj/euco-conclusions-19122024-en.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/>

⁽³⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/press-statement-eu-high-representative-foreign-affairs-and-security-policy-following-international_en