

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000126/25
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Vicent Marzà Ibáñez (Verts/ALE)
(14 January 2025)

Subject: Kurdish people and minorities in the Rojava region

The fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime has produced instability that has allowed the influence of jihadist groups to spread in Syria. As a result, rights violations are affecting minorities in the region (particularly the Kurdish people), women and human rights defenders, especially in the Rojava region.

Direct action by the international community in the face of humanitarian disasters has in the past set up no-fly zones and carried out external intervention under the principle of the ‘responsibility to protect’ civilians. In view of this:

1. Does the EU intend to promote or support a resolution (directly or by way of its Member States) so that the UN Security Council can adopt measures to protect the Kurdish people, in line with calls from the Syrian Democratic Forces and the Kurdistan Regional Government?
2. Does the Commission consider the humanitarian situation in Kurdistan to be less serious than cases in which humanitarian intervention was adopted, such as Resolution 688 in Iraq?
3. Given the situation faced by minorities, women and other persecuted groups in Syria, does the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy believe it is the time to ‘ease sanctions’ as she recently said?

Submitted: 14.1.2025

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

The fall of the Assad regime marks a new era of hope for the Syrian people after more than a decade of suffering. Since then, the EU has advocated a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned transitional process to ensure an orderly and peaceful transition, inclusive of all different components of Syrian society and guided by the respect for international law, human rights, fundamental freedoms, including freedom of speech and belief, pluralism, and tolerance.

The statements and commitments of the temporary authorities have so far been encouraging and we will judge them on their actions.

While the EU itself is not a member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), it coordinates positions with EU Member States that are members of the UNSC to present the above EU positions.

The EU urges all actors to avoid any further violence, to ensure the protection of civilians and to uphold international law. External actors should also respect Syria’s unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The humanitarian situation in Syria continues to be very dire, including in the northeast. Despite the highly challenging security environment, EU humanitarian partners, together with local organisations, are providing emergency assistance on a needs basis to all affected communities throughout the country.

EU sanctions were adopted against the Assad regime, responsible for the violent repression of the civilian population. In view of supporting an inclusive transition as well as a swift economic recovery, reconstruction and stabilisation, the Council agreed in January 2025 on the suspension of some economic sanctions, to be rolled out in a staged approach and in a reversible manner, with the EU assessing if the conditions in Syria allow for further suspensions.
