

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000295/25
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Nikolas Farantouris (The Left)
(23 January 2025)

Subject: Protecting ethnic minorities and religious communities in Syria

Developments in Syria, which have seen the overthrow of the Assad regime and the emergence of a transitional Islamic government, have raised concerns about the future of the country and the wider region. At the same time, the actions of Türkiye and other non-EU countries in the territory of Syria, competition for and tensions over the region ⁽¹⁾ and talk of possible larger scale intervention ⁽²⁾ compound the risks and geopolitical instability in the region. Against this backdrop, concerns are growing about the protection of the rule of law and respect for the rights of ethnic minorities and religious communities in Syria. Given the current geopolitical instability in the region and the need to ensure a smooth and inclusive political transition, based on democratic legitimacy and free from foreign interference, in the spirit of UN Security Council Resolution 2254 ⁽³⁾, will the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy say:

1. Does she intend to carry out an official visit to Syria and engage with the country's new transitional regime?
2. If so, will she formally raise the issue of fully protecting the rights of ethnic minorities (such as Kurds) and religious communities (such as Christians) in Syria?
3. What assurances has she received or does she intend to seek in relation to the above issue?

Submitted: 23.1.2025

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

The EU stands with all Syrians, both in the country and in the diaspora, in their efforts to reunite and rebuild their country, restore justice and ensure accountability.

The High Representative/Vice-President and other members of the Commission have engaged with Syria's interim authorities discussing restoring stability, supporting an inclusive political transition as well as Syria's recovery and future reconstruction. The EU is also stepping up its presence in Damascus and aims to fully reopen its Delegation, security conditions allowing.

Whether in public statements or diplomatic engagements, including in coordination with international partners, the EU has called on transitional authorities to ensure that all Syrians, from all components of society, are protected and included in the transition process.

The EU systematically and consistently calls for all actors in Syria to uphold the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Syrians in their diversity, based on their equal rights as citizens. All external actors must respect the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Syria.

The EU is attentive to the reassuring statements of the new transitional authorities but most important to their actions which it follows closely.

It will adjust its approach, if needed, with the overarching aim of supporting the Syrian people, and an inclusive, Syrian-led and Syrian-owned transition, guided by the respect for international law, human rights, fundamental freedoms, pluralism and tolerance among all components of society.

¹ <https://www.foxnews.com/world/tensions-between-israel-turkey-escalate-over-syria-its-time-pay-attention>

² <https://www.politico.eu/article/turkey-recep-tayyip-erdogan-syria-rebels-kurds-ypg-israel/>

³ https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2254.pdf