

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002916/25

**to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Bert-Jan Ruissen (ECR), Tomislav Sokol (PPE), Georgiana Teodorescu (ECR), Antonio López-Istúriz White (PPE),
Sebastian Tynkynen (ECR), Stephen Nikola Bartulica (ECR), Geadis Geadis (ECR), Christophe Gomart (PPE)**

(16 July 2025)

Subject: New EU support to Syria despite lack of reforms and failure to protect minorities

Earlier this year, the EU lifted sanctions on Syria and pledged significant financial support to the new al-Sharaa regime. On 23 June 2025, the Council reaffirmed the EU's commitments to Syria while also calling on the Syrian regime to respect human rights without discrimination of any kind and condemning the attacks on the Alawites in spring 2025 ⁽¹⁾.

However, the recent attacks on the Alawite minority ⁽²⁾ and, most recently, the suicide bombing at a church in Damascus on 22 June 2025 ⁽³⁾ indicate that the current regime is incapable of adequately protecting religious minorities or upholding respect for human rights. Additionally, a recent report by IMPACT-se ⁽⁴⁾ proves that the regime plans extensive Islamisation of school textbooks.

1. Does the EEAS consider the recent violence to be in breach of the Syrian authorities' agreed commitments to protect all (religious) minorities?
2. Is the lifting of sanctions on Syria and/or the funding of Syria conditional, and if so, what mechanisms are in place to guarantee that the conditions are met, specifically when it comes to upholding human rights and protecting minorities?
3. How does the EEAS propose to monitor the announced changes to Syrian school textbooks, and does it plan to insist on compliance with Unesco standards?

Submitted: 16.7.2025

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission

(17 September 2025)

The EU has been alarmed by violent incidents that have occurred in Syria over the past few months, and strongly condemned the horrific crimes against civilians.

The EU condemned in a series of statements the coastal violence in March ⁽⁵⁾, the terrorist attack against Mar Elias Church ⁽⁶⁾, and the violence in Southern Syria ⁽⁷⁾.

The EU welcomed a recent Commission of Inquiry report ⁽⁸⁾ and has called for transparent, credible and impartial investigations, and for all perpetrators to be held accountable.

In May 2025, the EU lifted economic sanctions on Syria to genuinely support Syria's economic recovery and inclusive transition, while maintaining sanctions related to the Assad regime and those based on security grounds ⁽⁹⁾. In May ⁽¹⁰⁾ and June ⁽¹¹⁾ 2025, the EU also introduced sanctions against human rights violators.

Now is imperative to step up dialogue and to actively promote and advance a truly inclusive and peaceful, Syrian-led transition that guarantees human rights and fulfils the aspirations of all Syrians from all ethnic and religious backgrounds.

The EU continues to call for the implementation of the transitional authorities' initial commitments in this regard, and for the full, equal and meaningful participation of all Syrians in all spheres of political life and society and will continue to follow closely developments on the ground and remain attentive to the actions of the transitional authorities.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/06/23/syria-council-approves-conclusions/>.

⁽²⁾ <https://www.reuters.com/investigations/syrian-forces-massacred-1500-alawites-chain-command-led-damascus-2025-06-30/>.

⁽³⁾ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/22/islamic-state-suicide-bombing-damascus-church-multiple-deaths>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/A-Review-of-Hayat-Tahrir-al-Shams-Intended-Changes-to-the-Syrian-Curriculum.pdf>.

⁽⁵⁾ Syria: Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the recent wave of violence, 11 March 2025. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/03/11/syria-statement-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union-on-the-recent-wave-of-violence/>.

⁽⁶⁾ Syria: Statement by the Spokesperson on the terrorist attack in Mar Elias church in Damascus, 23 June 2025. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/syria-statement-spokesperson-terrorist-attack-mar-elias-church-damascus_en.

⁽⁷⁾ See footnote 1.

⁽⁸⁾ Syria: Statement by the Spokesperson on the report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Violations against civilians in Coastal and Western Central Syria in January — March 2025; 15 August 2025. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/syria-statement-spokesperson-report-independent-international-commission-inquiry-violations-against_en.

⁽⁹⁾ Syria: EU adopts legal acts to lift economic sanctions on Syria, enacting recent political agreement, 28 May 2025, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/05/28/syria-eu-adopts-legal-acts-to-lift-economic-sanctions-on-syria-enacting-recent-political-agreement/>.

⁽¹⁰⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202501110.

⁽¹¹⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202501255.

The EU follows developments in the education sector, including reports regarding the contents of textbooks. It will continue to engage with Syrian authorities and other partners to promote inclusive, non-discriminatory education in line with international standards.

Syria's educational system should serve all children regardless of their background and contribute to reconciliation rather than division.
