

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003093/25
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Yannis Maniatis (S&D)
(25 July 2025)

Subject: Attacks on ethnic and religious minorities in Syria

Syria has always been a state with a rich multicultural identity, in which Muslims (Sunni and Shia), Kurds, Druze, Christians of various denominations, Armenians and other minorities have coexisted. Unfortunately, in recent months we have seen a significant increase in attacks on religious and ethnic minorities, often with the support, if not the participation, of forces close to Syria's interim government. The latest examples are the bombing of the Orthodox church of the Prophet Elias in Damascus, but also attacks on the Druze community in the southern region of Suweida, where more than 1 000 people have been killed and even more displaced.

Given that the EU has lifted all sanctions on Syria, will the High Representative say:

1. What will she do to protect Syria's multicultural character and its religious and ethnic minorities?
2. Is she willing to impose new sanctions if the interim government continues to allow and support attacks on the Druze, Kurds and Christians?
3. Having regard to the jihadist past of the interim government and the measures to limit women's rights, how will she ensure that the interim government does not proceed with a model of 'ethnic and religious homogeneity' by means of violence, which would undermine any prospect of sustainable peace, national reconciliation and democratic transition in Syria and create a new source of instability in the region?

Submitted: 25.7.2025

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

The EU has been gravely alarmed by violent incidents that have occurred in Syria since March 2025, and have claimed a high number of victims, including civilians.

The EU strongly condemned the terrorist attack perpetrated against Mar Elias church ⁽¹⁾, and more recently, the violence in Southern Syria ⁽²⁾.

The EU called for a transparent, credible and impartial investigation, and for all perpetrators to be held accountable and brought to justice. In May ⁽³⁾ and June ⁽⁴⁾ 2025, the EU introduced sanctions against human rights violators.

The EU believes that it is the time for dialogue and for advancing a truly inclusive and peaceful, Syrian-led transition that guarantees human rights and fulfils the aspirations of all Syrians.

Syria's transitional authorities bear the responsibility to protect all Syrians without distinction, and to take necessary steps towards disarmament, demobilisation and the restructuring of national security forces in line with international norms and standards.

Furthermore, all parties must stop all acts of violence, ensure the safety of all civilians, and prevent any further incitement and sectarian discourse.

The EU welcomed the transitional authorities' commitment to build a new Syria based on national reconciliation, rule of law, and human rights for all Syrians: the National Dialogue Conference, the adoption of a Constitutional Declaration, and the appointment of two transitional justice authorities were first steps in this long process.

The EU will continue to call for the implementation of these commitments 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.

⁽¹⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/syria-statement-spokesperson-terrorist-attack-mar-elias-church-damascus_en.

⁽²⁾ <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/>.

⁽³⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202501110.

⁽⁴⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202501255.