

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001099/25
to the Commission
Mathilde Androuët (Pfe)
(14 March 2025)**

Subject: Concerns about humanitarian aid in Syria reaching minorities persecuted by Islamists

Last December, when Islamists took power in Syria, Ursula von der Leyen recalled that the EU had been Syria's largest donor since 2011, providing EUR 33 billion in humanitarian aid. This, she said, had been done 'while respecting the principles of no contact, no cooperation, no funding to the Assad regime' ⁽¹⁾. The Commissioner for Preparedness, Crisis Management and Equality, Hadja Lahbib, announced in January that in 2025 the Commission would provide further humanitarian aid to Syrians totalling EUR 235 million ⁽²⁾.

The massacres of civilians committed by Islamist fighters supporting Ahmed al-Sharaa's 'provisional government' ⁽³⁾ raise questions about the extremist militias' intention to allow this aid to be distributed fairly, especially to the Alawite community, but also to the Christians, who urgently need it and who, for political reasons, receive little help from the West ⁽⁴⁾.

In this context, will the Commission pay particular attention to ensuring that the humanitarian aid is properly distributed, with the same political and 'ethical' requirements expressed under the previous regime?

Submitted: 14.3.2025

**Answer given by Ms Lahbib on behalf of the European Commission
(14 May 2025)**

The EU strictly adheres to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, as outlined in the EU Treaties and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid ⁽⁵⁾. The EU provides humanitarian aid to all people in need in Syria, without discrimination and irrespective of ethnicity, faith or other considerations other than need. This includes the Alawite community and Christian populations.

The EU's humanitarian assistance is delivered through certified humanitarian partners in all parts of Syria, regardless of the area of control. EU-funded humanitarian operations are based on people's needs, humanitarian principles, and accountability to affected populations.

The resilience/non-humanitarian assistance provided in Syria by the EU also follows strict parameters of implementation. It aims to foster social cohesion by bringing together Syrians and countering any form of community or ethnical fragmentation.

The EU was gravely alarmed by the horrific sectarian violence in Syria's coastal region targeting minorities. On 11 March 2025, the High Representative/Vice-President issued a statement on behalf of the EU, strongly condemning the attacks ⁽⁶⁾. This was also supported by the Joint Press Statement issued on 18 March 2025 by the Commissioner for Equality; Preparedness and Crisis Management, Commissioner for the Mediterranean, High Representative/Vice-President, and the Foreign Minister of the Syrian transitional government, His Excellency Asaad Hasan Al-Shaibani ⁽⁷⁾.

The EU welcomed the transitional authorities' commitments to establish an independent investigative committee and called on them to allow the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic to investigate.

⁽¹⁾ Press statement by President von der Leyen with President of Türkiye Erdoğan', European Commission, 17 December 2024.

⁽²⁾ EU provides EUR 235 million humanitarian aid to Syrians', European Commission, 17 January 2025.

⁽³⁾ Massacres en Syrie: les nouvelles autorités mises à l'épreuve par les pires violences depuis la chute d'Al-Assad', Franceinfo, Fabien Magnenou, 10 March 2025, https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/revolte-en-syrie/massacres-en-syrie-les-nouvelles-autorites-mises-a-l-epreuve-par-les-pires-violences-depuis-la-chute-d-al-assad_7121439.html.

⁽⁴⁾ Les aides financières à la Syrie rétrécissent, la minorité chrétienne en danger', Vatican News, Delphine Allaire, 19 June 2023, <https://www.vaticannews.va/fr/monde/news/2023-06/syrie-chretiens-guerre-moyen-orient-onu-ue-reconstruction-ong.html>.

⁽⁵⁾ Joint Statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission, OJ C 25, 30.1.2008, p. 1-12, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A42008X0130%2801%29>.

⁽⁶⁾ <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/>.

⁽⁷⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/03/18/brussels-ix-conference-on-standing-with-syria-meeting-the-needs-for-a-successful-transition-joint-press-statement/>.