

(English version)

Priority question for written answer P-001737/25
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Francisco Assis (S&D)
(30 April 2025)

Subject: Arbitrary arrest and torture of Belgian-Portuguese researcher Joseph Figueira Martin in the Central African Republic

On 26 May 2024, Joseph Figueira Martin, a humanitarian researcher and dual citizen of Belgium and Portugal, was abducted by the Wagner Group in Zémio, a city in the east of the Central African Republic, under the pretext of being the holder of two passports, while working as a consultant on behalf of the American non-profit organisation Family Health International (FHI) 360.

He was tortured for several days before being transferred to Bangui. Here, he was handed over to the Central African Republic authorities and subsequently detained at the *Office central pour la répression du banditisme* (OCRB), under the accusation of being an American spy. On 5 July 2024, he was transferred from the OCRB to the military prison at Camp de Roux and has been awaiting legal proceedings ever since. The penalties for the charges brought against him are life imprisonment and forced labour.

In the light of the above:

1. Is the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) duly following the case of this EU citizen, who has been in prison for almost a year?
2. What relevant EU mechanisms have been mobilised to address his dire situation?
3. What steps will the VP/HR take to ensure that Figueira Martin is treated in a humane manner and has access to a fair and independent trial?

Submitted: 30.4.2025

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

The High Representative/Vice-President and the European External Action Service are following the case since its inception, in close cooperation and consultation with the Belgian and Portuguese authorities who have had access to Mr Figueira Martin and have been providing him with regular consular assistance.

The High Representative/Vice-President, together with Belgium and Portugal, have stressed to the authorities of the Central African Republic the imperative that Mr Figueira Martin's rights to due process be upheld and that his detention conditions respect international standards.
