

(English version)

Priority question for written answer P-002501/25
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Nikolas Farantouris (The Left)
(23 June 2025)

Subject: Bombing of an orthodox church in Damascus

Yesterday (Sunday 22 June 2025), a suicide bomber who was a member of the Islamic State opened fire before blowing himself up during the Sunday service at the Greek Orthodox church of Prophet Elias in Damascus, killing at least 30 and wounding more than 60 Greek Orthodox Christians. Yesterday's dramatic events of religious fundamentalism constitute another bloody episode of violence in this ongoing series of attacks on schools, churches, public and private spaces. On 23 January ⁽¹⁾, 17 March ⁽²⁾ and 7 April 2025 ⁽³⁾, I warned of the massacres orchestrated or tolerated by the Islamist Jolani regime in Syria and called for specific EU action.

Given the above, can the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy answer the following:

1. Will a delegation of European officials, as well as a team of inspectors, go to Damascus on an exceptional basis to chronicle the attacks and atrocities that have taken place?
2. Will there be an immediate review of the framework of cooperating with and lifting EU sanctions on the Government of Damascus?
3. Will the Jolani regime be required to hold elections in a set timeframe?

Submitted: 23.6.2025

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

The EU strongly condemned the terrorist attack perpetrated against Mar Elias church in Damascus, which claimed a large number of victims ⁽¹⁾.

This is a grave reminder to intensify efforts to ensure the enduring defeat of Daesh and other terrorist groups, which continue to pose a threat to Syria, the region and Europe.

State institutions have the responsibility to maintain order and ensure the security of all Syrians without distinction. The EU consistently raises this matter in contacts at political level and through the EU Delegation in Damascus.

The EU has been a staunch supporter of accountability mechanisms in Syria and calls on the transitional authorities to hold all perpetrators accountable in line with international norms and standards.

In May 2025, the EU lifted economic sanctions on Syria, while maintaining sanctions related to the Assad regime and those based on security grounds — reaffirming its commitment to support socioeconomic recovery and an inclusive peaceful transition.

The EU also introduced individual listings against human rights violators and those fuelling instability in Syria, both under the Assad and post-Assad era.

The holding of a National Dialogue Conference, the adoption of a Constitutional Declaration, the appointment of a transitional government and the establishment of a Supreme Committee for People's Assembly Elections are first encouraging steps taken by the transitional authorities in this long process.

The EU calls again for genuine elections to be held within three to five years in line with international standards, allowing for the full political participation of all Syrians ⁽²⁾. The EU stands ready to support Syria in these endeavours.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-000295_EN.html

² https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=642935808482110&id=100082970882824&mibextid=wwXlfr&rdid=RXcoxKXUi42yf4D#

³ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-001399_EN.html

⁽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/2025/06/23/syria-council-approves-conclusions/>.