

(English version)

Priority question for written answer P-004194/25
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Bruno Gonçalves (S&D), Francisco Assis (S&D)
(24 October 2025)

Subject: Urgent appeal regarding the case of Joseph Figueira Martin

Joseph Figueira Martin, a Belgian-Portuguese citizen, was abducted by the Wagner Group and subsequently detained in the Central African Republic for over 500 days under deplorable conditions. Given the lack of credible and substantiated evidence justifying such decision, the Parliament, in its resolution of 10 July 2025 ⁽¹⁾, called for his immediate and unconditional release.

It has been established that Mr Martin's trial will start on 28 October 2025. However, there is no certainty regarding the fairness of this process, in addition to the lack of meaningful diplomatic developments. We hereby reaffirm the need for urgent action in safeguarding the rights of this EU citizen, and request your reaction to the following questions:

1. What direct diplomatic efforts have been taken by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and will be taken to ensure the safety and release of Mr Martin?
2. What steps will the VP/HR take to ensure that Mr Martin has access to a fair and independent trial and does that include the possibility to dispatch observers to his trial?
3. Is the VP/HR willing to impose targeted EU measures should the Central African Republic authorities persist in violating his rights, as requested by the Parliament?

Submitted: 24.10.2025

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

The High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) are closely following the case since its inception, in cooperation and consultation with the Belgian and Portuguese authorities who have had access to the person mentioned in the subject of the question and have been providing him regularly with consular assistance.

The EEAS, together with Belgium and Portugal, has stressed to the authorities of the Central African Republic the importance of upholding the rights of the person mentioned in the subject of the question to due process and ensuring that the detention conditions comply with international standards.

The EEAS and the relevant Member States have ensured the presence of diplomatic staff to observe the trial.

As regards possible restrictive measures, the HR/VP recalls that the EU always keeps all options under review in response to serious human-rights violations. Any decision in this regard would require a careful assessment by Member States in the Council, taking into account developments on the ground and the effectiveness of ongoing diplomatic engagement.

The HR/VP remains committed to pursuing all available diplomatic channels to ensure that the rights of the person mentioned in the subject of the question are respected.

¹ ¹Texts adopted, P10_TA(2025)0162.