

Question for written answer E-015437/2015
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Barbara Matera (PPE)

Subject: VP/HR - 'Legalised extortion' in Syria

Bashar al-Assad's regime has forcibly disappeared more than 65 000 people in Syria in order to extort large sums of money from their relatives.

According to a recent Amnesty International report, Bashar al-Assad and his allies have kidnapped tens of thousands of people since the start of the civil war, in a campaign which amounts to a crime against humanity.

The report also contains tragic statements from relatives who say that they have paid the equivalent of over EUR 100 000 in bribes in an attempt to save their loved ones.

The bribes were paid to government officials, who subsequently became untraceable, in exchange for false information.

1. Is the VP/HR aware of this situation?
2. If so, what action has she taken, or does she intend to take?