

Question for written answer E-010143/2015
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea (ALDE)

Subject: VP/HR - Sexual violence against young girls in Sierra Leone

According to the report 'Children's Ebola Recovery Assessment' conducted by various NGOs and supported by UNICEF, there has been a dramatic surge in child exploitation and violence against minors in Sierra Leone as a result of the school closures during the Ebola crisis, which lasted nine months, and the problem has been further exacerbated by the Government's decision to bar pregnant young girls from the classroom.

The report shows that the children themselves blame the school closures for the increase in cases of sexual violence.

This situation is causing young girls to become stigmatised in their communities and condemning them to a future of dependency and abuse.

Bearing in mind that the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019) lists the rights of girls as one of the Commission's key priorities, I would like the VP/HR to answer the following questions:

1. What action do you plan to take in order to put a stop to the violence suffered by young girls in Sierra Leone?
2. Do you think there is an urgent need to put pressure on the Government of Sierra Leone to guarantee access to education for all girls, in view of the fact that excluding them from the classroom exposes them to the risk of sexual exploitation?
3. Do you plan to ask the authorities in Sierra Leone to take urgent steps to reduce the number of sexual violence and abuse cases?