

**Question for written answer E-013702/2015
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 130

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Subject: VP/HR - Moroccan Government request for Human Rights Watch to suspend its activities

The Moroccan Government has asked the human rights defence organisation Human Rights Watch to suspend its activities in the country. The Moroccan authorities believe that this prestigious NGO is not being objective in its reporting of human rights violations, which show that Morocco has yet to fulfil its commitments to stamp out torture and other abuses, as made clear in the reports of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan E. Méndez, and other UN authorities. The Moroccan Government's retaliation against Human Rights Watch follows the expulsion of two members of Amnesty International last June and restrictions placed on human rights organisations in Morocco and in the non-self-governing territory of Western Sahara.

Does the VP/HR not believe that suspending the activities of Human Rights Watch is at odds with the recommendations made by the United Nations for Morocco to prevent and investigate cases of torture and abuse committed by the security forces?

Does the VP/HR not believe that the Moroccan Government's retaliation against Human Rights Watch is an affront to freedom of expression and undermines Morocco's commitment to put a stop to human rights violations?