

**Question for written answer E-006702/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Lorenzo Fontana (ENF)

Subject: Religious persecution in Algeria: the case of Slimane Bouhafs

It is currently being reported in the media that an Algerian citizen, Slimane Bouhafs, is being persecuted in his own country after being accused of blasphemy for converting from Islam to Christianity. Bouhafs is reported to have posted some items on the social networks which have been considered harmful to Islam, a charge he has always denied.

Slimane Bouhafs, who has already been sentenced in the first instance to five years in prison and a fine of 100 000 Algerian dinars (approx. EUR 800) has been tried in a manner judged by many humanitarian organisations to be very different from the ordinary procedure.

Slimane Bouhafs, 49, began studying Christianity in 1997 and was then baptised in 2006.

Given that Algeria has one of the toughest laws on blasphemy, but also a constitution that protects religious freedom and freedom of opinion, can the Commission say:

- is it aware of the case in question?
- will it act to urge the Algerian authorities to respect human and civil rights, as required by the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights?
- will it take long-term initiatives to put an end to all persecution of Christians that is a frequent occurrence mostly in countries with a Muslim majority?