

**Question for written answer E-007048/2016  
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**  
Rule 130  
**Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea (ALDE)**

Subject: VP/HR - Human rights in Saudi Arabia and the cases of Raif Badawi and Ashraf Fayad

Saudi Arabia is still violating human rights both internally and internationally. In 2015, it reached a record high of 157 executions. It also continues to repress dissidents such as Raif Badawi, winner of the 2015 Sakharov Prize, and Ashraf Fayad. Both have been accused of apostasy and insulting Islam, and have been sentenced to prison and lashes.

The Saudi Government has also been accused of carrying out a third of its air strikes in Yemen on civilian sites, as reported by the British newspaper *The Guardian*.

Given these facts and bearing in mind the EU's commitment to uphold human rights in Saudi Arabia:

1. What steps has the VP/HR taken to release Raif Badawi and other prisoners of conscience such as Ashraf Fayad?
2. Has she urged the Member States to champion the cause of human rights and the release of prisoners of conscience in their bilateral relationships with Saudi Arabia?
3. Does she think that Saudi Arabia should be suspended from the UN Human Rights Council, given that it has engaged in gross and systematic violations of human rights, in breach of the rules of the UN General Assembly?