

**Question for written answer E-001171/2017
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**
Rule 130
Barbara Matera (PPE)

Subject: VP/HR - Persecution of Baloch separatists in Pakistan

The Baloch separatist movement, which is secular and has no links with Islamic extremism, has been fighting for more than 70 years for the creation of an independent state of Balochistan, which would include territory in Pakistan near that country's border with Iran.

Since spring 2003, the conflict has escalated and the government in Islamabad, with the assistance of Pakistan's intelligence agency (ISI), has been violently clamping down on separatist opposition groups and rigorously censoring media outlets and social networks to block all references to the Baloch movement.

While 2000 people have been officially declared dead or missing, NGOs working in Balochistan claim that 6000 people have been killed over the last 10 years – including the Baloch journalist and activist, Sabeen Mahmud, who was assassinated in 2014 – and 18 000 dissidents have gone missing, including the poet Salman Haider, who has not been seen or heard from since July 2016.

1. In light of the above, can the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy say what steps the EU will take to investigate the enforced disappearances of activists in Balochistan and bring this state of affairs to the attention of the international community?
2. Can she say what action the EU will take to guarantee freedom of expression for the Baloch separatists and protect them against violent reprisals by the Pakistani Government?