

**Question for written answer E-005052/2017
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**
Rule 130
Sotirios Zarianopoulos (NI)

Subject: VP/HR - Increasing number of settlements in Palestine's occupied territories

In mid-July 2017, the Israeli authorities restricted access to Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem, on the pretext of stepping up security. This was yet another decision accompanied by fierce suppression and Palestinians being killed by Israeli army fire, provoking the indignation of the Palestinian people. The new restrictions and prohibitions are a blatant violation of the Palestinian people's fundamental rights and are intended, among other things, to change the status quo at historic religious sites, such as Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Meanwhile, the number of settlements in Palestine's occupied territories is growing all the time as a result of the Israeli Government's decisions. Indicatively, building permits for more than 1 500 settlement housing units were issued just recently for East Jerusalem.

Israel's provocative behaviour and aggression towards the Palestinian people continues with the expansion of settlements, illegal detentions, and murders intended to intimidate Palestinian activists.

At the same time, the European Union and the SYRIZA-ANEL Government are not only maintaining their relations with Israel, but improving them. As part of the 'geostrategic improvement of the country's position', the SYRIZA-ANEL Government is seeking to serve the interests of Greek corporate groups in the region by deepening economic and political relations with Israel, as verified by the 3rd Greece-Israel High-level Cooperation Council and the Trilateral Summit between Greece, Cyprus and Israel.

- What is the Vice-President/High Representative's position on the appeal not to change the status quo at historic religious sites such as Al-Aqsa Mosque?
- Does she condemn the Israeli Government's further expansion of settlements into occupied territories?