

**Question for written answer E-006407/2017
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 130

Elena Valenciano (S&D) and Inmaculada Rodríguez-Piñero Fernández (S&D)

Subject: VP/HR - Rape as a weapon of war in the Central African Republic

A recent report by Human Rights Watch provides evidence of the systematic rape of women and girls as a weapon of war by armed groups in the Central African Republic, in a prolonged conflict that, according to the United Nations, shows signs of genocide.

Eyewitness accounts describe cases of woman between the ages of 10 and 75 becoming the victims of repeated rape, kidnapping, sexual slavery, mutilation, physical assault, burning, HIV infections and multiple pregnancies. These women are usually rejected by their families and communities and stigmatised for life.

In a country whose justice system is largely dysfunctional, the perpetrators are able to commit their crimes with utter impunity. Despite having more than 12 000 personnel in the Central African Republic, MINUSCA is failing to protect the civilian population. The recent setting-up of the Special Criminal Court (SCC) is an important step forward but it still suffers from underfinancing.

- Does the EU contribute any specific aid to help these victims recover physically, psychologically and socially and to support the SCC?
- Is it planning any practical measures, such as sanctions against those responsible for grave violations of human rights on both sides of the conflict?
- In view of the upcoming renewal of MINUSCA's mandate, are any initiatives being planned to bolster its capacity and enhance its effectiveness?