

Question for written answer P-001192/2018
to the Commission
Rule 130
Neena Gill (S&D)

Subject: Sexual exploitation of women in return for aid in Syria

Research by the United Nations Population Fund, corroborated by international humanitarian organisations, reveals that forcing women to have sex in return for aid is a widespread and longstanding practice in the context of the Syrian conflict.

The abuse is reportedly committed by third-party actors and local officials channelling aid on behalf of humanitarian organisations and agencies, including UN agencies. It is alleged that the latter are aware of the abuse but turn a blind eye, given that the intervention of third-party actors is seen as the only way of getting aid into dangerous parts of Syria that the staff of international organisations cannot access.

1. Did the Commission investigate reports about such sexual abuse when they first surfaced three years ago in relation to the aid it was providing in Syria and refugee camps in the region?
2. What steps will the Commission take to ensure that this abuse is addressed within the framework of the UN as a matter of urgency, as an operational matter concerning UN humanitarian agencies and in the framework of enforcing UN Security Council resolutions concerning humanitarian access?
3. Will the Commission put in place effective measures to address the issue of sexual abuse faced by women in need of aid and ensure they are streamlined globally?