

**Question for written answer P-001771/2019
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**
Rule 130
Kati Piri (S&D)

Subject: VP/HR - Political prisoners belonging to the Hirak El-Rif movement in Morocco

On 5 April 2019, the court of appeal in Casablanca upheld the long prison sentences handed down to Nasser Zefzafi and the other leaders of the Hirak El-Rif protests. The protests – which were sparked by the death of fishmonger Mohcine Fikri in 2016 – were fuelled by widespread discontent over the Rif people’s lack of socio-economic rights and government corruption. Amnesty International exposed serious flaws in the trial, including the use of torture to extract confessions. The organisation has also called for the political prisoners’ immediate release. Last December, Zefzafi was shortlisted for the Sakharov Prize.

Does the VP/HR share the opinion of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other human rights organisations that the trial was unfair and politically motivated?

Is the VP/HR willing to summon the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to the European Union to ask for clarification on the situation of the political prisoners and demand their immediate release?

If she deems his answers to be unsatisfactory, will the VP/HR be willing to suspend the bilateral funding awarded to Morocco under the European Neighbourhood Instrument?