

**Question for written answer E-008670/2011
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: VP/HR - Forced disappearance at Damascus airport of Syrian psychoanalyst Rafah Nached

On 10 September 2011, the well-known Syrian psychoanalyst Rafah Nached, aged 66, was arrested at Damascus airport as she was about to take a flight to Paris in order to join her daughter, who was about to give birth there. Rafah Nached is the first woman to work as a psychoanalyst in Syria. Her inclusive and pluralist humanitarian and scientific work has brought her international renown and she is known to have a close connection with France. She is not, however, known to be a political activist. Her family have received no news of her since the day of her arrest.

This disappearance has mobilised human rights associations and fellow psychoanalysts around the world, and an appeal has already been made to the Syrian Government and police force to provide information and immediately release Rafah Nached. The situation is made more serious by the fact that she suffers from a heart condition requiring regular medication.

The political situation in Syria is worsening, with the brutal repression of popular protests having caused numerous deaths, a situation which continues. This disappearance, which has been taken up by voices around the world not only calling for Rafah Nached to be freed but also speaking up on behalf of all of those who have disappeared in Syria, is an example of the widespread difficulties faced by the people of Syria.

Does the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs intend to intercede on behalf of this professional person who has connections with one of the Member States, invoking the defence of universal human rights? Will the EU impose further sanctions on Syria in response to the escalation of violence in that country?