

**Question for written answer E-009521/2011
to the Commission
Rule 117
Harlem Désir (S&D)**

Subject: VP/HR - Shell's involvement in an armed conflict in Nigeria

A British NGO has accused the Anglo-Dutch oil company Shell of stirring up violence in Nigeria by paying hundreds of thousands of dollars to government forces to keep the country in a state of armed conflict. It claims to have witness statements and contracts implicating Shell that substantiate these accusations.

Last year, Shell allegedly paid almost EUR 120 000 to armed groups who have hounded locals, caused hundreds of people to flee their homes, and tortured and carried out arbitrary executions of civilians.

It is unacceptable that a European multinational should behave in such a way, in complete disregard of European rules and the EU's social, environmental and development objectives (Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union).

It is equally unacceptable that the EU should remain aloof to possible violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms by Nigerian government forces which represent a breach of the obligations set out in Articles 9 and 11 of the Cotonou Agreement, to which Nigeria is a signatory.

Will the High Representative carry out an investigation to shed light on the possible involvement of Shell and the Nigerian Government in these human rights violations? If that involvement is confirmed, what action does the High Representative intend to take under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement?

What steps does the Commission intend to take to prevent or punish such abuses?