

**Question for written answer E-000645/2012  
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 117

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Subject: VP/HR - Clarification of the tragic events in Kazakhstan in December 2011

Further to the tragic events which occurred in the town of Zhanaozen (western Kazakhstan) between 16 and 18 December 2011:

1. What action can the Vice-President/High Representative take with a view to carrying out an independent, international investigation into what really happened in Zhanaozen and the village of Shepte, and why? Official reports put the number of deaths at 17, with the unofficial figure standing at over 80.
2. What action is the Vice-President/High Representative planning to take in order to gain a full account of the events that occurred in Zhanaozen and Shepte (Mangystau Province) and to carry out an investigation in an effort to identify those responsible for the deaths and injuries amongst participants in the events, and into disappearances of Kazakh citizens, irrespective of their political beliefs and the positions held by them?
3. Does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to examine whether the Kazakh authorities have complied with international standards in adopting 'extraordinary' laws – especially those concerning national security and television – and using them to restrict the political and civil rights of Kazakhs?
4. Does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to take diplomatic action with a view to securing the release of individuals who have been imprisoned, and ensuring that detained oil company strikers and 'People's Front' activists are recognised as political prisoners? Natalia Sokolova, Akzhanat Aminov, Ajzhangul Amirova, Talgat Saktaganov, Amangeldy Lukmanov, Roza Tuletaeva and Ruslan Simbinov are among the individuals concerned.
5. Does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to call on the government of Kazakhstan to conduct a detailed investigation into the attacks on and threats against journalists and camera crews from the *Stan.kz* internet portal, and to put a stop to a situation in which people are being harassed for carrying out their professional activities?