

**Question for written answer E-007912/2012
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 117

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Subject: VP/HR - Attacks on Christians in Egypt

We have recently received disturbing reports concerning brutal and unusually bloody attacks against Christian Copts. A wave of violence has affected the Copt community following the electoral victory and presidential nomination of the Islamist Mohamed Morsi, who is linked to the Muslim Brotherhood. The balance of Egypt's domestic politics has thus been tipped towards an Islamic state that does not offer legal safeguards to other faiths. This has resulted in attacks on places of worship and on believers. Particularly sadistic scenes took place on a square in Cairo, where – according to reliable media sources – supporters of the President crucified Christian Copts on trees in close proximity to the Presidential Palace.

In light of the above:

1. What steps has the EU Ambassador to Egypt taken in order to safeguard the rights of religious minorities living in that country?
2. How does the EEAS assess the situation of Christians prior to and following the Arab Spring in Egypt?
3. What steps have been taken to properly safeguard the rights of religious minorities in Egypt?
4. Is consideration being given to introducing sanctions or suspending trade agreements in the event that attacks against Christians in Egypt increase?