

**Question for written answer E-010245/2012
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 117

Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL), João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL), Pino Arlacchi (S&D), Bart Staes (Verts/ALE), Helmut Scholz (GUE/NGL), Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL), Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL), Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL), Alda Sousa (GUE/NGL), Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL), Sabine Lösing (GUE/NGL), Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL), Ivo Vajgl (ALDE), Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE), Raúl Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Jill Evans (Verts/ALE), Norbert Neuser (S&D), Nicole Kiil-Nielsen (Verts/ALE), Andres Perello Rodriguez (S&D), Antonio Masip Hidalgo (S&D), Rui Tavares (Verts/ALE), Åsa Westlund (S&D), Michèle Rivasi (Verts/ALE), Ana Gomes (S&D), Marco Scurria (PPE) and Jean Lambert (Verts/ALE)

Subject: VP/HR - Violence in Laayoune (occupied Western Sahara): repression of Sahrawi demonstrators and expulsion of Spanish and Norwegian observers

In 2010, thousands of Sahrawis decided to respond to the Moroccan occupation force by setting up the Gdeim Izik camp on the outskirts of Laayoune in order to call for an improvement in their living conditions and a legitimate referendum on self-determination. On 8 November 2010 the Moroccan army decided to counter-attack, dismantling the camp and wreaking violence. Two years after these events, 22 Sahrawi political prisoners are still in Sale Prison and their trial before a military court has been postponed several times.

UN envoy Christopher Ross recently visited Western Sahara for the first time (including the occupied territories and the refugee camps in Tindouf as well as the liberated areas). On 1 November 2012 the Moroccan police used violence to suppress peaceful demonstrations in Laayoune, Dakhla and Smara. Several protesters were arrested and dozens wounded. Prominent human rights defender Aminatou Haidar was beaten and harassed.

On 7 November 2012 the Moroccan forces expelled 18 Spanish and 4 Norwegian international observers from occupied Laayoune by force. The Spanish citizens were denied access to consular assistance. These international observers were trying to assess the deteriorating human rights situation.

In the course of the EU-Morocco dialogue established by the association agreement between the two parties, which includes a recent visit to Morocco, has the Vice-President/High Representative requested information from Morocco concerning the violence suffered by the Sahrawi people, which is being perpetrated with impunity by the Moroccan police and others in the occupied territories of Western Sahara?

Does the Vice-President/High Representative condemn these acts of violence against the Sahrawi people and the expulsion by force of international observers? In light of these acts, does the Vice-President/High Representative believe that Morocco is blatantly violating Article 2 of the association agreement, which requires both parties continually to respect basic democratic principles and fundamental human rights in both their domestic and external affairs?