

**Question for written answer E-004424/2013
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 117

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Subject: VP/HR - Arrest warrants issued against political and human rights activists by the Egyptian government

Two years after the revolution of 25 January 2011, it is a paradox to witness the Egyptian Government pursuing the same political activists who helped overthrow the non-democratic Mubarak regime, and in particular activists from the April 6 Youth Movement. According to Amnesty International, 33 people have been arrested and charged in the past two weeks, notably: Mr Bassem Youssef, Egypt's most famous satirist; Mr Ahmad Abdallah, a leading activist with the April 6 Youth Movement; Mr Alaa Abdel Fatah, a famous blogger; Ms Mona Seif, human rights activists; and Ms Mahinour Masri, a famous human rights lawyer.

These arrests constitute an unjustified act of intimidation based on the professional activities and political beliefs of the accused, thereby undermining freedom of expression in Egypt. Another cause for deep concern is the case of Mr Hassan Mustapha, who faces a two-year prison sentence on the grounds of politically-motivated actions.

The EU must not see the past's mistakes repeated – it must speak out and take action against these violations of democracy in Egypt. As such, we would like to ask the VP/HR the following questions:

1. Did the VP/HR raise the above cases with President Morsi and members of the Egyptian Government during her visit to Egypt on Sunday, 7 April 2013?
2. Did the VP/HR meet with the opposition leaders in order to combine efforts and support their initiatives in building a democratic state that respects the rule of law, the separation of powers, and freedom of expression?
3. Did the VP/HR condemn the arrest warrants issued against political and human rights activists in Egypt?
4. At the March 2013 plenary session, Parliament voted a resolution urging the EU 'not to grant any budgetary support to the Egyptian authorities if no major progress is made regarding respect of human rights, freedoms, democratic governance and the rule of law'. How is the VP/HR implementing Parliament's recommendation?