

Question for written answer E-004545/2013
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 117
Peter van Dalen (ECR)

Subject: VP/HR - Two bishops kidnapped in Syria

Syria's state media reported on Monday, 22 April 2013 that two bishops were kidnapped in the province of Aleppo. The Syriac Orthodox and Greek Orthodox Archbishops of Aleppo, Yohanna Ibrahim and Paul Yazigi, were kidnapped in the village of Kfar Dael. They were on their way from Aleppo to the Bab al Hawa border crossing with Turkey and were doing humanitarian work.

1. Is the High Representative aware of this report?
2. Does she agree with me that, if confirmed, this incident marks a very dangerous development in an ever-escalating conflict which may set the various communities in Syria even more against each other and may lead to severe repressive measures against minority groups such as Christians?
3. According to Syria's state media, the bishops were kidnapped by rebels. Is the High Representative willing to ask the Syrian National Council to intervene in this kidnapping incident, with the aim of securing the bishops' release?