

**Question for written answer E-011695/2013
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 117
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD)**

Subject: VP/HR - Radical Islamist groups in Syria

According to the British consulting group IHS Jane's, one in 10 of the 100 000 rebels fighting the Bashar al-Assad regime is a jihad supporter from a group linked to Al-Qaida. A further 30 000 to 35 000 are Muslim fundamentalists who dream of setting up an Islamic government, but who do not support an international jihad. Another group, of over 30 000 people, are extreme Islamists. Recently a dispute has arisen among the rebels about the city of Azaz. This city is the gateway to northern Syria. It is through this gate that transport carrying humanitarian aid sent from European Union Member States, amongst others, passes. Finally, following several days of fighting, the city has found itself in the hands of ISIS Islamists. A few months ago these same rebels swore an oath of loyalty to Al-Qaida. This group is also responsible for the murders of numerous Christians. This trail of blood runs all the way from Der Ezzor to Idlib and Homs, reaching even to Damascus itself.

1. Does the High Representative monitor the activity of Islamist groups in Syria?
2. How does the High Representative assess the data quoted in the IHS Jane's report Does she agree with it?
3. Over 70% rebels are connected to Al-Qaida or extreme Islamist groups. In view of the above, does the High Representative intend to review her attitude and further support for the Syrian rebels?
4. What action is the High Representative taking to protect the Christian population from attacks by radical groups?
5. The High Representative has told us that the subject of the persecution of Christians in Syria by rebels was raised during talks with General Idriss. Despite this, the execution, kidnapping and mass displacement of Christians continues. This is also being done by rebels who are under the command of General Idriss in the Free Syrian Army. What measures does the High Representative intend to take against them?
6. In view of the increase in the strength of jihad-related groups, is the High Representative considering classifying the Syrian Al-Nusra Front as a terrorist organisation and entering it on the European Union's list of terrorist organisations?