

**Question for written answer E-003794/2019**

**to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**

Rule 138

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Subject: Escaped Islamist terrorists in Syria and the risk that Islamic State may be able to re-establish itself

The Turkish invasion of north-eastern Syria in October caused an unknown number of deaths among civilians and the military forces on the ground, as well as displacing thousands of people and damaging infrastructure and buildings.

After diplomatic mediation by Russia, Syria and the United States, while the EU remained silent, the offensive created a buffer zone on the border between Syria and Turkey.

For years, the area where the hostilities have been taking place has been the scene of a war between Kurdish soldiers, supported by US forces, and the last Islamic State fighters, who have been incarcerated by Kurdish guerrillas in prisons in the zone.

However, as a result of the conflict with Turkey, hundreds of Islamic prisoners have managed to escape from the prisons, and according to some analysts, they have either been sent to Europe or are trying to reorganise themselves on the ground to re-establish Islamic State.

Can the Commission therefore answer the following questions?

1. Does it think that the Turkish offensive may have allowed some of the most dangerous ISIS terrorists to escape?
2. Does it think that the Islamic State militiamen who have escaped from Kurdish prisons since the Turkish invasion can organise themselves to rebuild Islamic State?