

Question for written answer E-000874/2020

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: Rights of protesters in Lebanon

Dozens of people have been injured in the course of increasingly violent protests in Lebanon. Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese have taken to the streets since 17 October to call for the replacement of the ruling politicians, who are regarded as corrupt and unequal to the task of restoring the country's floundering economy. The inauguration of a new cabinet under Prime Minister Hassan Diab has done nothing to halt anti-government protests,

which appear to be attracting support from across the historical, cultural and religious divide. However, they do not have the backing of Iran and Hezbollah, which, from the outset, have never accepted the resignation of PM Saad Hariri. There is a real danger of external infiltration consolidating the influence of Tehran, especially following the appointment of Prime Minister Hassan Diab, who is politically closely in step with the pro-Iranian Hezbollah.

Lebanon, which is an integral part of the European Neighbourhood Policy, with around 1.5 million refugees from Syria and over 250 000 from the Palestinian territories, is the country with the largest number of refugees pro capita in the world. The EU is continuing to channel funds into development and humanitarian assistance.

In view of this, what steps are being taken by the High Representative to ensure the stability of the country, promote new governance, ensure public safety and uphold the right to demonstrate?