

Question for written answer E-001609/2020/rev.1

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

Rule 138

Malik Azmani (Renew)

Subject: New rising tensions in Iraq: repeating recent history

¹²On Wednesday 11 March, the Taji army base was targeted by airstrikes, resulting in multiple wounded and three dead soldiers serving the Global Coalition Against Daesh. One British soldier and two American soldiers lost their lives due to the attack on the base, which is found to the north of Baghdad. In retaliation, the US launched five airstrikes on strategic targets of the Iranian-backed militia Kataib Hezbollah, allegedly killing 26 militiamen.

This is not the first time we have seen this cycle of action and reaction. Just three months ago, a similar situation occurred in Iraq, which brought the region to the brink of war.

In response, the EU issued a statement saying that Iraq has to hold the perpetrators of the attack responsible. Simply issuing a statement is not enough, because European soldiers and personnel are stationed there and the stability of the region is once again at stake. The EU has to take action.³

1. What steps is the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative taking to hold the perpetrators of this attack responsible?
2. Does the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative agree that the Iraqi Government now has to take action by expelling Kataib Hezbollah, since they are slowing down the fight against ISIS by targeting our soldiers and continuing to destabilise Iraq?
3. Has the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative learned from the previous escalation in January and does it have a complete set of plans available for all scenarios?

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2020/03/12/pentagon-awaiting-decision-trump-how-respond-deadly-rocket-attack-iraq/>

² https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/76050/iraq-statement-spokesperson-attacks-coalition-forces_en

³ <https://www.trouw.nl/buitenland/het-dreigt-in-irak-weer-uit-de-hand-te-lopen-tussen-iran-en-de-vs~ba029ea7/>