

Question for written answer E-003054/2021

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

Rule 138

Dietmar Köster (S&D)

Subject: Human rights defenders in the United Arab Emirates

The Amnesty International report on Saudi Arabia¹ shows that repression of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly has intensified. Among those who have been harassed, arbitrarily detained, prosecuted and/or jailed are government critics, women's rights activists, human rights defenders, relatives of activists, journalists, members of the Shi'a minority and online critics of the government's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the same report, virtually all known Saudi Arabian human rights defenders inside the country were detained or imprisoned at the end of the year. Grossly unfair trials continued before the Specialized Criminal Court and other courts. Courts resorted extensively to the death penalty and people were executed for a wide range of crimes. Migrant workers were even more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation because of the pandemic, and thousands were arbitrarily detained in dire conditions, leading to an unknown number of deaths.

Taking this into consideration:

1. Does the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) intend to discuss this report with the Saudi Arabian authorities?
2. Does the VP/HR intend to discuss this report within the EU Foreign Affairs Council?

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/saudi-arabia/report-saudi-arabia/>.