

Question for written answer E-002621/2022

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

Rule 138

Brando Benifei (S&D)

Subject: Serious socio-economic and political crisis in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is experiencing its most serious socio-economic and political crisis since it became independent in 1948.

The country is witnessing extraordinary public protests sparked by rampant inflation, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism-based economy, rising oil prices and a food crisis, all of which has seen it become increasingly dependent on donations and loans to buy food, medicines and fuel. Sri Lanka has defaulted on its debt payments and will have to submit a restructuring plan to the IMF by August.

The protesters have forced President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to leave the country after breaking into and occupying his residence. One protester has died of tear gas suffocation and a further 84 were hospitalised following the assault on the Prime Minister's office in Colombo. The President resigned on 13 July and the country is in the throes of a tense institutional crisis.

In the light of the above, can the Vice-President/High Representative state:

1. whether he is aware of this serious situation;
2. what steps he and the Commission have taken or plan to take to help Sri Lanka and its people resolve this unprecedented crisis?