

Question for written answer E-003363/2023

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

Rule 138

Lefteris Nikolaou-Alavanos (NI)

Subject: Penalties against Knesset Member

The Israeli Parliament's (Knesset) Ethics Committee has decided to ban Ofer Cassif, a Member of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality party (Hadash) and a member of the Israeli Communist Party's Political Bureau, from participating in the plenary sessions and parliamentary committee meetings for 45 days because of the public stance he took in favour of an immediate ceasefire in Palestine, a stance shared by millions of people worldwide who have taken to the streets to demonstrate and protest.

In a further escalation, Israeli police detained Mohammad Barakeh, head of the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel and former Knesset Member, along with five other Committee members, who were taking part in peaceful protests. This dangerous development is one of many organised attacks and threats by Fascist organisations against current and former Members of Parliament who have spoken out against the policies of Netanyahu's government. Such penalties and threats against elected officials directly stifle the right of Members of Parliament to keep reactionary government policy and the Parliament's decisions in check.

In view of this:

1. Can the Vice-president of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr Josep Borell, say what position he takes with regard to the unacceptable political persecution meted out against the Member of Parliament, Ofer Cassif, for speaking out against Israel's ongoing bloody violence against the Palestinians and asking for an immediate ceasefire?
2. What is his position regarding the Israeli government's witch-hunt against Arab and Jewish citizens who are calling for an immediate ceasefire?

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