

Question for written answer E-003702/2023

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

Rule 138

Dietmar Köster (S&D), Karsten Lucke (S&D), René Repasi (S&D), Andreas Schieder (S&D), Sara Skytvedal (PPE), Andrus Ansip (Renew), Olivier Chastel (Renew), Attila Ara-Kovács (S&D), Bert-Jan Ruissen (ECR), Antonio López-Istúriz White (PPE), Matthias Ecke (S&D), Frances Fitzgerald (PPE), Alice Kuhnke (Verts/ALE), Jakop G. Dalunde (Verts/ALE), Pär Holmgren (Verts/ALE), Ilana Cicurel (Renew), Maria Noichl (S&D), Nathalie Loiseau (Renew)

Subject: Sexualised violence in the context of Hamas attacks of 7 October 2023

The 7 October 2023 attack by Hamas terrorists on Israel marked a turning point in the Middle East and involved not only murder and kidnapping, but also systematic sexualised violence against women, in an attempt to commit genocide. Women were to be degraded and exterminated because they stood for the continued existence of Israel. The UN acknowledged these atrocities on 29 November 2023 and called for investigations on 1 December 2023. Delayed recognition compounds survivors' trauma, while silence encourages sexualised violence worldwide. We know from Holocaust studies that it took a long time for female survivors to report these terrible crimes. Israel is investigating over 1 500 potential cases of war crimes, particularly sexualised violence.

Based on accounts and reports, in addition to experience accumulated from armed conflicts in other regions and scientific literature on the vulnerability of hostages, serious concerns persist about ongoing gender-based violence against captives in Gaza.

1. What is the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy's opinion of the available reports¹ on Hamas' systematic use of sexualised violence on 7 October 2023 and what concrete steps will the VP/HR take?
2. What measures will the EU implement to adequately support the prosecution of perpetrators and to appropriately care for and support victims?
3. What initiatives is the EU planning to prevent such crimes from reoccurring?

Submitted: 18.12.2023

¹ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/how-hamas-used-sexual-violence-on-october-7th>;
https://www.phr.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/5771_Sexual_Violence_paper_Eng-final.pdf.