

**Question for written answer P-013410/2013
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**
Rule 117
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD)

Subject: VP/HR - Massacre of Christians in Sadad, Syria

In late October 2013 the Syrian army recaptured the town of Sadad, a Syriac Orthodox Christian settlement lying some 60 kilometres away from the strategic city of Homs. The Free Syrian Army had moved into the town, together with members of the Islamist al-Nusra Front, in September 2013.

After a week's fighting, the Syrian army recaptured the town, where it discovered mass graves. According to various sources, the graves contained the bodies of more than 35 people shot during mass executions. A further 10 people had been killed and their bodies thrown into the town's wells in order to contaminate the water. According to people in the town, all of the murders were carried out by Islamist rebels right after the town was occupied. They also said that the rebels had vandalised all of the town's churches and chapels, smashing everything inside.

The Syriac Orthodox Metropolitan of Homs and Mama, Archbishop Selwanos Boutros Alnemeh, said this was the worst massacre in two and a half years of civil war in Syria.

1. Is the High Representative aware of the massacre that took place in Sadad?
2. If she is, what action has she taken to date? Has she sought and received clarifications from the commanders of the Free Syrian Army?
3. Does she plan to take further steps to establish which rebel group was responsible for the massacre?
4. What does she recommend be done to put an end to rebel attacks on Christians and their places of worship (this is the second such attack on Christians in the last two months, the first having taken place in Maaloula)?