

Question for written answer E-005640/2020

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

Rule 138

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Subject: Violence against Hindu and Christian minorities in Pakistan

On 9 May 2020, a Christian church in Pakistan's Punjab province was desecrated in a land grab crime. On 11 May, 21 Hindu homes were set on fire in villages in the country's Sindh province. In one village, a Hindu woman was sexually assaulted and her family attacked.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's 2019 Report states that on average, more than 1 000 forced conversions take place every year.

In Pakistan, not only are religious minorities attacked; they are also denied any government aid in relation to coronavirus.

EU funding to Pakistan under the Development Cooperation Instrument for 2014 to 2020 amounts to EUR 653 million. Pakistan is also a beneficiary of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+).

In the light of his recent statement on human rights in the times of the coronavirus pandemic, could the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR):

1. explain what specific action is being taken to investigate and stop these violent discriminatory practices in Pakistan;
2. say what justification from the EU allows Pakistan to remain eligible for GSP+ when it has repeatedly failed to comply with international human rights conventions on religious freedoms?
3. say how his statement will ensure that Pakistan addresses its human rights abuses, including the persecution of religious minorities?