

**Question for written answer E-002713/2014
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 117

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Subject: VP/HR - Rights of women detained in Egypt

Recent news reports have revealed that Egypt is once again conducting 'virginity tests' on women who are detained. Virginity tests are invasive and Amnesty International considers them to be a form of torture. They consist of an examination that checks for blood in the hymen. It should be noted that the reports have not been widely verified or confirmed. When the Egyptian army first gained power, it stated that it would ban virginity tests, but that has still not happened. In fact, in 2012 General Abdel Fattah el-Sissi defended the tests, stating that they were intended 'to protect the girls from rape, and the soldiers and officers from accusations of rape'. It is troubling that an Egyptian presidential contender condones such tests, which violate the rights of women. They clearly constitute a breach of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Furthermore, they come in addition to the renewed effort to snuff out political protests, with protesters being arrested and subjected to horrendous prison conditions.

The EU-Egypt Taskforce has approved an aid package to help promote education, combat abuses against women and increase women's participation in the electoral process. However, it is important for the Commission to continue to speak out when the rights of Egyptian citizens are violated, as in this case.

1. What leverage does the Vice-President / High Representative intend to exert with a view to ensuring that the future leader of Egypt bans these so-called virginity tests and improves the rights of the country's most vulnerable people in light of the new severe crackdowns on political dissenters?
2. Does the Commission plan to offer financial or mediation assistance so that these claims of military oppression can be investigated in civilian courts, and the perpetrators brought to justice?