

Question for written answer E-001345/2024

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: Armenian detainees in Baku

After the forced exodus of the Armenian people residing in Nagorno-Karabakh, which amounts to an ethnic cleansing committed by Azerbaijan, several representatives of the former authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh were arrested and jailed in Baku¹. The list of arrested people includes former State Minister Ruben Vardanyan, who has been in prison awaiting trial since his arrest in September 2023. Mr Vardanyan recently embarked on a hunger strike to demand the immediate and unconditional release of all the Armenian hostages and prisoners of war being held illegally in Azerbaijani custody. His family say that they lost contact with him after he began his hunger strike².

1. Against this backdrop, what concrete measures does the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy intend to take to ensure the immediate release and repatriation of all the Armenian detainees being held in Azerbaijan?
2. In the meantime, it is vital to ensure that the detention conditions of the Armenian prisoners comply with international standards and conventions, most notably the international standards on detention of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights³. Has the EU Delegation in Azerbaijan taken any action in this regard? Has there been contact with the Baku authorities with a view to granting visits to the prisoners and verifying their conditions?

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¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/azerbaijani-court-extends-detention-former-top-karabakh-leader-2024-01-25/>.

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/ex-karabakh-official-held-by-azerbaijan-is-hunger-strike-2024-04-19/>.

³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/detention/international-standards-detention>.