

Question for written answer E-001795/2024

to the Commission

Rule 144

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Subject: Human rights violations by EU-funded forces in Tunisia

According to an article published in The Guardian¹ on 19 September 2024, members of the Tunisian coastguard, an authority that receives substantial EU funding², are regularly raping and torturing migrants. The article further accuses members of the Tunisian coastguard of cooperating directly with smugglers and continuing to engage in the practice of ‘desert dumps’. There is also a detailed description of the dramatic situation in a makeshift camp, near El Amra, which hosts tens of thousands of sub-Saharan refugees and migrants and to which neither the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees nor any other humanitarian organisation has access. It would appear that the European External Action Service and the Commission are aware of these severe human rights abuses³, but plan to continue cooperating directly with the Tunisian authorities, and even to enhance funding.

1. How long has the Commission been aware of such rape and torture by the EU-funded Tunisian authorities and what has been done to remedy the situation?
2. Does the Commission plan to continue and even enhance direct funding of the Tunisian authorities via the migration and mobility pillar of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed with Tunisia⁴?
3. What is the general assessment of the cooperation with Tunisia so far, taking into account the different areas covered by the MoU, including combating organised crime?

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¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/sep/19/italy-migrant-reduction-investigation-rape-killing-tunisia-eu-money-keir-starmer-security-forces-smugglers>.

² <https://www.statewatch.org/media/4205/eu-council-mocadem-action-file-16821-23.pdf>.

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/sep/13/eu-fears-for-its-human-rights-credibility-as-tunisia-crushes-dissent-leak-shows>.

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_3887.