European External Action Service (EEAS)

Syria: Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the recent wave of violence

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The European Union is gravely alarmed by the widespread violence in Syria's coastal region over the last days, which has caused a high number of victims, including many civilians. We strongly condemn the attacks by pro-Assad militias against security forces. We also condemn in the strongest terms the horrific crimes committed against civilians, including summary killings, many of which have been allegedly perpetrated by armed groups supporting the security forces of the transitional authorities.

We welcome the commitments made by the transitional authorities, and in particular the establishment of an investigative committee, in order to hold the perpetrators accountable in line with international law norms and standards. The EU calls for a swift, transparent and impartial investigation to be conducted to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice. We call on the transitional authorities to allow the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic to investigate all violations. Everything must be done to prevent any such crimes from happening again.

The EU continues to call for an end to violence across Syria, and urges all parties to protect Syrians from all religious and ethnic backgrounds without discrimination; it also calls for the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid, and respect of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in all circumstances. We also warn against the rampant manipulation of information, including by foreign actors, to stir further violence and instability.

The EU welcomes the agreement reached on 10 March between the transitional authorities and the SDF. This agreement could pave the way for increased stability and a better future for many Syrians. We encourage the parties to work on implementation and we stand ready to support.

The National Dialogue, which started in the end of February, should be instrumental to ensure that the transition delivers on the aspirations of all the components of Syrian society. Comprehensive transitional justice in particular is essential on the path to reconciliation and to building a peaceful Syria and an inclusive political transition.

The EU recalls its recent suspension of restrictive measures as part of a gradual, reversible approach. The EU will continue to examine possible further sanctions suspensions on the basis of close monitoring of the situation in the country.

The EU once again calls for the full respect of Syria’s sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. The EU is committed to supporting a peaceful and inclusive transition, away from malign foreign interference, which guarantees the rights of all Syrians without distinction of any kind.

Source: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/t%C3%BCrkiye/syria-statement-high-representative-behalf-european-union-recent-wave-violence_en