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Statement by EU High Representative on the publication of the report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, issued the following statement today:

"I welcome today's publication of the report of the independent International Commission of Inquiry. I am gravely concerned by its alarming findings on violations of international human rights law in Syria since March 2011.

The Commission of Inquiry has identified widespread and systemic violations of the human rights of civilians by the state and its armed and security forces, based on numerous credible first hand reports. The Commission of Inquiry concluded that members of the Syrian military and security forces have committed crimes against humanity in 2011.

I condemn in the strongest terms the brutal repression by the government of Syria against its own people, which has led to such appalling crimes. The EU has continuously pressed for strong action at all UN bodies to put an end to violence and human rights violations in Syria.

I welcome the decision by the League of Arab States to impose a range of restrictive measures against the Syrian government, in the face of continuing violence and human rights abuses, and following the government's refusal to accept an observer mission of the League.

Given the gravity of the situation and the urgency for the international community to respond, the EU is now calling for a Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council."

P R E S S

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