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Statement by the High Representative Catherine Ashton on the situation in Syria

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

"I strongly condemn the continued brutal crackdown against peaceful protesters, including by means of large-scale deployments of the Syrian military, in the city of Hama and elsewhere. This path of repression and violence discredits the promises by the Syrian leadership and its legitimacy and commitment to reform. Violent repression and dialogue are incompatible.

I want to stress again that a genuine national dialogue must be fully inclusive and take place without fear and intimidation. The opposition must play a key role in such a dialogue.

The Syrian government must also allow access without delay to independent observers, international media and humanitarian agencies."

P R E S S

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