EUROPEAN UNION

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Statement by the High Representative Catherine Ashton on Syria

Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy/Commission Vice President issued the following statement today:

"I welcome the UN Security Council Presidential Statement. It states unequivocally that the Syrian regime is responsible for widespread violations of human rights and the use of force against civilians.

This is a clear signal from the highest body of the international community taken with unanimity by the members of the Security Council.

I urge President Assad to listen to the international community, to finally stop the violence, to protect the Syrian people and to address the EU's repeated calls to grant fundamental freedoms. The legitimate demands of the Syrian people must be met. An irreversible transition to democracy must be started now.

The latest reforms announced by President Assad are in principle a step in the right direction, but only if they are genuinely put into effect. We are still waiting for previously announced reforms to be implemented.

I call on the Syrian authorities to alleviate the humanitarian situation as requested by the Security Council and to cooperate fully with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The EU continues to monitor the situation in Syria closely."

P R E S S

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