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Statement by the High Representative Catherine Ashton condemning the continued repression and violence in Syria and marking the anniversary of the uprising

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

"It is now one year since the Syrian people started their peaceful fight for freedom and democracy. The Syrian regime has responded with violence and repression.

I strongly condemn the continued brutal attacks by the Syrian regime, in particular in the cities of Idlib and Deraa, on this first anniversary of the uprising. The repression has reached unspeakable levels of violence.

I fully support the efforts of the Joint UN and League of Arab States Special Envoy, Kofi Annan, to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis. The Syrian regime needs to continue to engage with Kofi Annan and fully cooperate with him. It is crucial to immediately end the killing of civilians, withdraw the Syrian army from besieged towns and cities and engage in a peaceful transition for the sake of the Syrian population. There must be immediate and unhindered humanitarian access to those in need.

There must be a full investigation of the findings of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, which pointed to crimes against humanity and other gross violations of human rights committed by the regime. There can be no impunity for the perpetrators of such alleged crimes. The recent allegations of the use of anti-personnel landmines on the borders of Turkey and Lebanon are another cause of serious concern that require immediate investigation.

I stand by the Syrian people in their struggle for freedom, human rights and democracy on this anniversary of the uprising."

P R E S S

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