Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the violent clashes in Cairo

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

"I am gravely concerned at the deaths and injuries resulting from the violent clashes outside a Coptic church in Cairo on 7 May. I condemn unreservedly the violence and my thoughts go to the families of the deceased, and to all victims.

I commend the prompt measures taken by the interim leadership to restore order, and I urge the authorities to bring those responsible for the violence to justice, before civilian courts.

I also welcome the statements by Christian and Muslim leaders calling for calm and restraint. Freedom of religion or belief is a universal human right which needs to be protected everywhere and for everyone. Freedom of religion or belief is intrinsically linked to freedom of opinion and expression as well as to other human rights and fundamental freedoms, which all contribute to the building of pluralist and democratic societies."

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