Statement by EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on the situation in Egypt

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 deeply concerned about the clashes that took place in recent days between demonstrators and security forces in Egypt. Violence must stop and the rule of law has to be maintained. An independent investigation into these disturbing events should be carried out. Those responsible have to be held accountable.

I deplore the heavy loss of life and the many injuries and I extend my profound condolences to the families of the victims. I also ask the authorities to release those detained for peacefully expressing their views and urge the authorities to honour their promise to end military trials for civilians. All political parties should reaffirm their commitment to the democratic process that Egypt has embarked upon. The swift shift of power to civilian rule is a key element of the transition and should happen as soon as possible on the basis of an inclusive dialogue. I take good note of the important commitments made by the SCAF in this regard.

I remain confident that the Egyptian people and the authorities will find a way to move peacefully forward on their path towards democracy. The upcoming elections are a very important step and I hope they can go ahead as planned."

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