Statement by the spokesperson of the EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on the latest developments in Guinea Bissau

The spokesperson of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice President of the Commission Catherine Ashton issued the following statement today:

"The High Representative is deeply concerned by yesterday's violent actions in Guinea Bissau by some elements within the military. She condemns in the strongest possible terms such anti-constitutional actions. She would like to express her full solidarity with all those who have suffered from such violent activities, and she warmly commends the serene and peaceful reaction of most Guinean citizens.

Civilian rule must be strictly respected and protected by the military and security forces. Military subordination to civilian power is essential; it will necessitate further Security Sector Reform, with the help of West African, regional and international partners.

Violent attempts against constitutional legality can not be allowed, and must stop. The High Representative calls on all actors in the country to solve differences using exclusively legal means, and to uphold at all times the rule of law. It is also most important that those responsible for criminal actions are brought to justice, within strict respect for due process and legal rights. She calls for proportionality and restraint in the reactions by the authorities to protect civilian rule.

Only through respect for constitutional legality can Guinea Bissau achieve real development and prosperity for its citizens. The EU firmly supports peace, democracy and the rule of law in Guinea Bissau. "

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