Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on recent executions in Iraq

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

"I am concerned by recent reports of a number of executions in Iraq. There were at least 123 executions in 2012, but none since the beginning of this year. I therefore deeply regret that the authorities have chosen to re-start executions now, when the Iraqi government had committed to re-examining the cases of prisoners and detainees.

Iraq is aware of the EU's unequivocal position against the death penalty. The EU strongly believes that capital punishment violates the most fundamental of human rights. The EU appreciates the seriousness of the crimes for which those sentenced to death have been convicted. The EU however does not believe death penalty will act as a deterrent.

I therefore call on the Government of Iraq to cease all use of the death penalty and to accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), aiming at the complete abolition of the death penalty. Pending the abolition, I urge the Iraqi authorities to introduce a moratorium on the use of the death penalty."

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