



EUROPEAN UNION

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Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the situation in Syria

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 deplore the escalating use of brutal force against protestors in Syria in recent days. I reiterate my repeated calls on the Syrian authorities to change course. This includes releasing all those arrested in connection with protests, as well as other political prisoners who remain under detention despite the recent amnesty announced by President Assad. The siege of a number of cities, including Deraa and Jisr al-Shughour, must be lifted without delay.

Those responsible for the violence and killings must be held accountable. As requested by the UN Human Rights Council on 29 April, I urge the Syrian authorities to cooperate fully with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. I am deeply concerned by the worsening humanitarian situation caused by the actions of the Syrian authorities and call upon them to allow immediate and unhindered access to international human rights monitors and humanitarian agencies, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The shooting, assault and arrest of protestors and the very disturbing violations of fundamental human rights must cease now, to leave room for an inclusive national dialogue. This is the only way to achieve the peaceful change the Syrian people are calling for.

The EU is working with its international partners for a condemnation by the UN Security Council of the ongoing repression in Syria and to press the Syrian authorities to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people."

P R E S S

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