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STATEMENT

**by the Spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton
on political unrest in Venezuela**

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

"As unrest in Venezuela enters its 7th week, the High Representative supports regional efforts to bring all Venezuelan parties to the table so as to put an immediate stop to violence and unrest. The High Representative welcomes the statement following this week's UNASUR ministerial mission in support of an inclusive dialogue between the government, all political parties and civil society.

The detention of students and political figures; the recent destitution and express sentencing of elected mayors; and the announced ousting of an elected member of congress are all cause for concern. The High Representative joins UNASUR's call to moderate the discourse and to respect all human rights and welcomes UNASUR's decision to appoint a witness of good faith to facilitate dialogue.

The High Representative is saddened by the growing number of casualties of demonstrators, law enforcement officials and bystanders; condemns intolerance and the use of violence by all sides; and is worried by the reports of alleged excessive and disproportionate use of force by State security agents. The continuing violent clashes between security forces, pro-government groups and anti-government protesters must cease.

The High Representative trusts the group of foreign ministers appointed by UNASUR to pursue the process will work to ensure the dialogue will be truly comprehensive, in a format and with an agenda agreeable to by all parties."

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

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