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STATEMENT

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the EU response to the worsening security situation in Eastern Ukraine

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

"Today, we added 15 names to the list of those subject to sanctions for threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine.

I am alarmed by the worsening security situation in Eastern Ukraine. The downward spiral of violence and intimidation undermines the normal functioning of the legitimate State institutions. A number of people have been killed, wounded, tortured or kidnapped in the last few days. I notably condemn the shooting of Mayor of Kharkiv Henadiy Kernes yesterday and the detention of military observers from OSCE participating States in Slovyansk by armed separatists since last Friday. All persons still illegally detained by armed groups in Eastern Ukraine need to be immediately released. I am also concerned about continued attacks on journalists and the deterioration of media freedom environment in Eastern Ukraine, including the illegal seizure of TV transmission towers.

These developments run counter to the Joint Geneva Statement on Ukraine of 17 April, which set out key steps to de-escalate tensions and restore security. I welcome the concrete actions taken so far by the Ukrainian Government in this regard, notably the pledge to strengthen the powers of the regions and give a prominent status to the Russian language, the drafting of a law giving amnesty to those who freely lay down their arms and the continued collection

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of illegal weapons. I call on Russia to take now concrete action in support of the Geneva accord.

We strongly support the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. We are looking into requests for further assistance to allow the Mission to fully play the role confined on it in the Geneva Statement and count on the OSCE participating States to do the same.

We will continue to monitor developments closely and if necessary we will look at possible additional individual measures."
