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Statement by the spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the rising political tensions in the Maldives

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

"The High Representative is deeply concerned about the recent escalation of political tension and violent protests in the Maldives.

The High Representative is convinced that continued political unrest, heavy-handed responses by security forces, and charges filed against political leaders will only lead to further deterioration of the political climate in the country and will adversely affect the lives of all Maldivian citizens.

The High Representative acknowledges the efforts of the Commonwealth Special Envoy, Sir Don McKinnon, to strengthen the Maldives Commission of National Inquiry whose purpose it is to establish an objective account of the events which led to the resignation of President Nasheed and the transfer of power to the present Government on 7 February 2012. She appeals to all parties to refrain from any actions that could jeopardise completion of the Commission of National Inquiry's work, including legal action against political leaders.

In the EU's view it is more important than ever that the political forces in the Maldives cooperate in making the democratic system work. Without a consensus on how to proceed the country will be unable to deal with the political, economic and environmental challenges which will determine its future."

P R E S S

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