Statement by HR/VP Josep Borrell on the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime

On 9 December, the European Union remembers the victims of genocides, across the world, and throughout history.

We must never forget the atrocities of the past. We owe it to the victims of these crimes against humanity. We also owe it to ourselves: we can only build a better future if we acknowledge the dark days of the past. It is a moral obligation towards humanity.

Genocide does not just happen overnight. It is a process. There are always warning signs. We must act upon these signs immediately. Exacerbated nationalism, xenophobia, racial and ethnic profiling must be fought with the strongest determination.

The establishment of effective legal tools and policies at all levels, as well as structures designed to identify and address these early warning signs, is a first step towards preventing genocide.

The International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and the Prevention of this Crime marks the anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, on 9 December each year.

The Convention provides the legal basis for action by States to prevent genocide. It now has 152 parties, including all EU Member States. Its universality is within reach. In the past twelve months alone, 3 countries – Dominica, Mauritius and Turkmenistan – have acceded to the Convention.

Ratifying the Convention recognises the responsibility of States towards their populations and shows respect for the victims of this horrendous crime.

The Responsibility to Protect and the prevention of genocide and other atrocity crimes form an integral part of the EU's foreign and security policy. The EU will continue working with national and
international partners including civil society to prevent genocide and to fight impunity wherever it occurs.

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