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Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on allegations of violations committed in Libya

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

"I welcome the statements made by the Chairman of the National Transitional Council, Mustafa Abdul-Jalil, on the need to respect international human rights law and standards, most recently in his address in Tripoli on Monday. These commitments are very important and should lead to concrete action on the ground to prevent abuse. Those responsible for previous human rights violations should be brought to justice.

Nonetheless, I remain very concerned at recent reports of human rights violations in Libya, including cases of arbitrary detention and extra-judicial killings. According to these reports, crimes have been perpetrated by both sides to the conflict. Such practices must stop immediately.

The situation of non-combatant sub-Saharan populations and black Libyans is especially worrying. Stigmatised as being pro-Gaddafi mercenaries because of the colour of their skin, these groups are particularly vulnerable and must be adequately protected. More generally, all combatants who have been detained must be treated in accordance with international law and human rights standards."

P R E S S

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