

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on
the political violence in Bangladesh**

1. The European Union is deeply concerned by the ongoing and longrunning political confrontation and the criminal and terrorist acts in its wake, which has endangered the lives and well-being of innocent citizens and inflicted serious costs on the nation. We deeply regret the loss of lives and sufferings caused by the recent bomb explosions. The EU hopes that the perpetrators of the bombing incidents during recent months will be soonest brought to justice. The EU urges all parties, political office holders and others with influence to show restraint and moderation and encourage others to abstain from all forms of violence.
2. The forthcoming general election will be an important step in promoting the democratic process. The EU notes the institution of a neutral caretaker government for the administration of the election. However, government and political parties alike have a heavy responsibility to find ways to promote a peaceful political environment that encourages voters to participate in the polls and that ensures a free, fair and transparent election. To this end the EU offers to provide an Election Observation Mission.
3. The EU calls upon all political leaders to seek dialogue, to show tolerance and to conduct themselves in a way that will enable everyone to recognise the election results as free and fair.
4. The EU reaffirms its commitment to a deepened and enhanced partnership with Bangladesh and to furthering her democratic, social and economic development.
5. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.

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