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**EU Presidency statement on the recent violence in the Palestinian Territories**

The Presidency of the European Union is deeply concerned at the recent outbreak of violence between Fatah and Hamas supporters in the Palestinian Territories which during the past few days has cost the lives of over 40 people and injured numerous others.

The Presidency condemns in the strongest possible terms the attacks by illegal militias on the National Security Forces. It calls on all sides to prevent a civil war, to cease hostilities forthwith, and to return to a political solution to the crisis in accordance with the agreement reached in Mecca on 8 February. The Presidency strongly reiterates its support for President Abbas.

The Presidency is highly concerned at the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the wake of the fighting and urges all sides to assume their responsibility for the protection and supply of the civilian population.