

EU Presidency Statement on further escalation of violence in Gaza and Southern Israel

The Presidency of the European Union follows with grave concern further escalation of violence in Southern Israel and the Gaza Strip. The confrontation has caused tragic loss of life also of a number of civilians, among them innocent children. The Presidency expresses its sincere sympathies to the families of victims.

The Presidency condemns the recent disproportionate use of force by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) against Palestinian population in Gaza and urges Israel to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from all activities that endanger civilians. Such activities are contrary to international law. The Presidency at the same time reiterates condemnation of continued firing of rockets into Israeli territory and calls for its immediate end.

The Presidency rejects collective punishment of the people of Gaza. We are deeply worried about the suffering of the civilian population on Israeli and Palestinian side. We have stated too many times that both Israelis and Palestinians deserve to live in peace and security.

The peace process should not be interrupted. Actions that undermine this process should be stopped immediately. Cessation of violence is one of the key elements in achieving the commitments made in Annapolis. The Presidency urges all sides to advance on the path to a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict as set out in Annapolis.

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