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Statements by the HR/VP

## **Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini following yesterday's events in Gaza**

At least 16 Palestinians were killed yesterday by Israeli Security Forces using live ammunition during clashes and demonstrations inside Gaza near the border with Israel. Hundreds were also injured as tens of thousands demonstrated inside Gaza near the border fence.

The EU mourns the loss of life. Our thoughts are with the families of the victims. The use of live ammunition should, in particular, be part of an independent and transparent investigation. While Israel has the right to protect its borders, the use of force must be proportionate at all times.

Freedom of expression and freedom of assembly are fundamental rights that must be respected. An immediate return to calm is essential. All those concerned need to exercise restraint and avoid further violent escalation and any acts that could put civilians in danger.

The EU reiterates its calls for an end to the closure of Gaza and a full opening of the crossing points, while addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns. The EU further urges the Palestinian sides to increase their efforts to enable the Palestinian authority to exert its full control over Gaza.

Yesterday's events highlight that the lack of process is not an option. A political solution for Gaza and an urgent resumption of peace talks towards a two state solution are the only way for Palestinians and Israelis to live side by side in peace and security.

### **Press contacts**

Press Contacts:

**Maja KOCIJANCIC**

[Maja KOCIJANCIC](#)

Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement

Negotiations

+32 (0)2 29 86570

+32 (0)498 984 425

## **Lauranne DEVILLE**

[Lauranne DEVILLE](#)

EEAS Press Officer

+32 (0)2 29 80833

+32 (0)460 758 775

[www.eeas.europa.eu](http://www.eeas.europa.eu)

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