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STATEMENT

**by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton
on rocket attacks from Gaza**

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

"I strongly condemn the recent rocket attacks on Israel, for which the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which is listed by the EU as a terrorist organization, has claimed responsibility. There can be absolutely no justification for the deliberate targeting of innocent civilians, and I call for an immediate end to such acts.

The European Union, recalling its support to the consolidation of the ceasefire of 21 November 2012, urges maximum restraint in order to prevent a further escalation and calls for an end to all violence.

The situation in the Gaza Strip, including the deteriorating humanitarian conditions, underlines once more the urgent need to bring a solution to the conflict. The on-going negotiations are a unique opportunity to move towards a two-state solution so that Israelis and Palestinians can finally live in peace and security. In this context, I also regret the recent incidents that led to the loss of life in the West Bank. The European Union will continue to work with all those with influence to achieve a peaceful solution."

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

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