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## EGP CONDEMNS ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE IN GAZA AND CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE

The Spokespersons of the European Green Party today condemned in the strongest terms the escalation of violence in Gaza in the past 4 days and called for an immediate ceasefire.

**EGP Co-Spokesperson Philippe Lamberts** said: "We call for an immediate and unconditional end to the spiral of violence which is reported to have caused the deaths of over 320 people, including many innocent civilians. While we unreservedly condemn the rocket attacks by Hamas against Israeli territory, we consider the response of the Israeli government to be disproportionate and completely unacceptable. We appeal to the Israeli government to put an end to the air raids on Gaza and to Hamas to order an end to their rocket attacks. Such a ceasefire must be followed by negotiations between all sides in the Middle East conflict to seek an enduring peace in the region.

**EGP Co-Spokesperson Ulrike Lunacek**, who is also an MP and the Austrian Greens' Parliamentary Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs, continued: "The EU has a key role to play in this process and we call on the current French Presidency of the EU and the incoming Czech presidency to call an urgent meeting of EU states in order to reach agreement on a concerted EU approach to a conflict which has a major impact on global security. EU institutions and member states must also use whatever influence they have with Israel to ensure that humanitarian aid is allowed in to Gaza and that the blockade on Gaza is lifted."

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