



Statement by President von der Leyen on the occasion of the minute of silence held by the College in honour of the victims of the terrorist attacks in Israel, in presence of the ambassador of Israel to the EU

Brussels, 11 October 2023

Welcome Ambassador Haim Regev.

At the dawn of Shabbat, last Saturday, the whole world woke up in horror. Hundreds of innocent people were murdered in cold blood.

Hamas terrorists killed women and children in their homes. They hunted hundreds of young men and women who were celebrating life and music. They took hostage hundreds of innocents, whose fate is still unknown.

These innocents were killed for one single reason. For being Jewish and living in the State of Israel.

It is an ancient evil, which reminds us of the darkest past and shocks all of us to the core.

We have to be clear in defining this kind of horror. It is terrorism. And it is an act of war.

This was the worst attack inside Israel since the creation of the State.

And there can only be one response to it. Europe stands with Israel. And we fully support Israel's right to defend itself.

I spoke with President Herzog and conveyed to him my full support.

And the Berlaymont was lit up in the colours of the flag of Israel, alongside many other European and global monuments.

I ask you to observe a minute of silence for the victims of these heinous crimes.

This is a tragedy for Israel, for the Jewish people, and also for Europe.

There can be no justification for Hamas' act of terror. This has nothing to do with the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. The horror that Hamas has unleashed will bring more suffering upon innocent Palestinians.

Only Hamas is responsible for its actions.

Our humanitarian support to the Palestinian people is not in question. Yet it is important that we carefully review our financial assistance for Palestine. EU funding has never and will never go to Hamas or any terrorist entity. So we will now again review the entire portfolio in light of an evolving situation on the ground.

Finally, the current situation will have a major impact on the region.

We will have to work to contain its destabilising effects, including on the ongoing rapprochement between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

We will also have to monitor closely Iran's posture, given its long-standing support to Hamas.

Over the coming days we have to be united and coordinated.

But my message is clear. Europe stands with Israel. Europe stands with our friend and partner.

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