

Message to staff from President von der Leyen on the situation in the Middle East

23/10/2023

Dear colleagues, the tragic events unfolding in the Middle East are a deep source of concern and of sorrow for all of us. On October 7, Hamas terrorists slaughtered more than 1,400 men, women and children in Israel, injured thousands and took more than 200 hostages.

AT THE SAME TIME we are mourning the loss of every innocent life in this conflict – of all faiths and of all nationalities.

From the start of this crisis, we have worked around the clock to alleviate the suffering of ALL those affected by the indiscriminate terror attacks – from showing our solidarity with Israel to tripling our humanitarian aid to Gaza and organising an air bridge to bring much-needed support to the Palestinian people.

I also know that many of you are affected by this crisis on a personal level. Among those killed or taken hostage by Hamas are many European citizens - perhaps some of you have even lost loved ones or are fearing for the safety of friends or family taken hostage.

These are challenging times for all Europeans. Some of you may even feel uneasy. A terror attack took place in Arras and another one has just taken place in the capital of Europe itself. Colleagues – whether Jewish, Muslim, Christian, or non-confessional, are feeling vulnerable, because of who they are and what they believe in.

And of course, colleagues posted in Delegations in the region are working in very difficult security and emotional conditions.

I want to reassure you that Europe will always be on the side of humanity and of human rights. We will work together with the international community to ensure that international humanitarian law is upheld. We are redoubling efforts to provide emergency humanitarian aid to civilians affected by this war.

And we will spare no effort, together with our partners, to help bring stability and a lasting peace to the region, based on the two-state solution, as confirmed recently by the European Council.

I would like to thank each and every one of you who are working around the clock, in Brussels and in particular in Delegations in the region, to address the situation on the ground. And I encourage you to stay strong.

I would also like to thank colleagues who have shared their views and feelings regarding these very difficult and emotional developments.

Together with other members of the College, I am ready to engage, and listen to your concerns and suggestions.

Europe.Table