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Press release | 21.11.2012

EFA Calls for Gaza ceasefire

Press release from EFA MEPs Jill Evans, Frieda Brepoels and François Alfonsi

MEPs from the European Free Alliance (EFA) group in the European Parliament have backed demands for a ceasefire in Gaza.

The MEPs including **Jill Evans, Frieda Brepoels** and **François Alfonsi** are supporting a resolution on Thursday in the European Parliament calling for an end to all aggression.

They also called for an end to the Israeli blockade of Gaza so that humanitarian aid and essential supplies could get through to civilians.

The MEPs warned of the dangers of even further escalation of the conflict and said that there was no justification for the collective punishment of the people of Gaza. The Israeli blockade has been in place since 2007 preventing the movement of people and access to essential goods.

They condemned the use of violence and urged the EU to take an increasingly active role in building a lasting peace and bringing an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Looking ahead to Palestine's bid for permanent observer status at the UN, the EFA MEPs backed the move as a step towards achieving a peace agreement. Three MEPs from the EFA Group visited Palestine last month. Information on the visit can be accessed here EFA West Bank and East Jerusalem Visit

EFA President and Plaid Cymru MEP **Jill Evans** said:

"Our sympathy is with all the victims of the recent violence. It is vital that a ceasefire is agreed and, further, that the UN, EU and the international community take serious steps to end the Israeli blockade of Gaza and the occupation of Palestine. The only long term prospect for peace is an end to the conflict and a two state solution.

"There are 1.2 million refugees living in Gaza. It has been under a land and sea blockade since 2007 and the humanitarian situation is desperate. I visited Gaza after the last Israeli offensive in 2009. Once again we see the loss of life and the destruction of homes and clinics as bombing continues. We support Palestine's bid for

recognition at the UN which can act as a catalyst for achieving peace and justice"

Flemish MEP **Frieda Brepoels** (N-VA) said:

"Respect for international human rights and humanitarian law by all parties remains an essential precondition for achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Current developments are therefore extremely worrying and could potentially have enormous consequences in the whole Middle East adding to an already tense situation in the region.

"It is therefore of the utmost importance to let reason prevail and not let the situation escalate which would serve no-one. For both sides there is no other option other than to acknowledge the obvious truth that must be heard, namely that there is no alternative to a negotiated comprehensive settlement of the conflict leading to a two state solution with Israel and a Palestinian state living side by side in secure and internationally recognised borders."

Corsican MEP **François Alfonsi**, said:

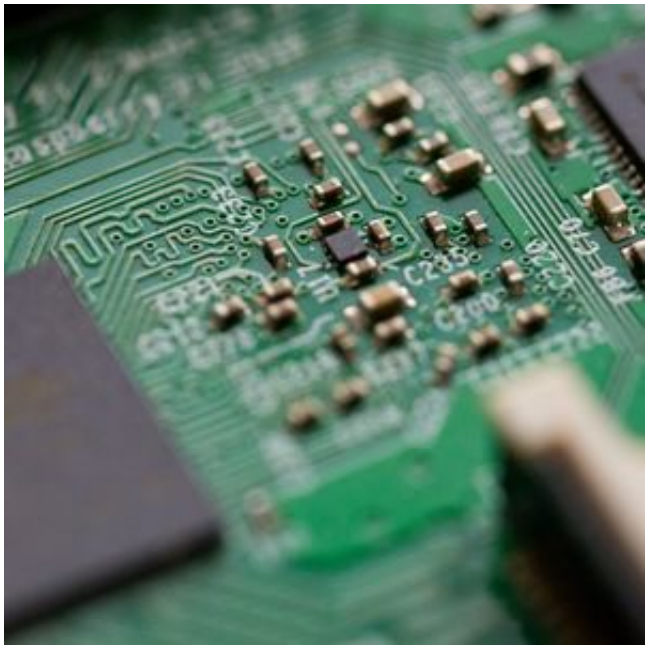
"This umpteenth renewal of violence between Hamas and Israel shows not only how deeply ingrained this conflict is, but also reveals, once again, the helplessness and incompetence of an international community that is complicit in the slow decay of the two-state solution.

"We know that extremists on both sides of the conflict will not achieve a two-state solution. They have to be gotten around or the situation will drag on interminably. Our recent visit to Palestine showed us that the vast majority of Palestinians are ready for dialogue, as long as their rights to life and freedom are respected and guaranteed. Mahmoud Habbas's approach to the UN is of paramount importance because it obliges the international community to face its responsibilities."

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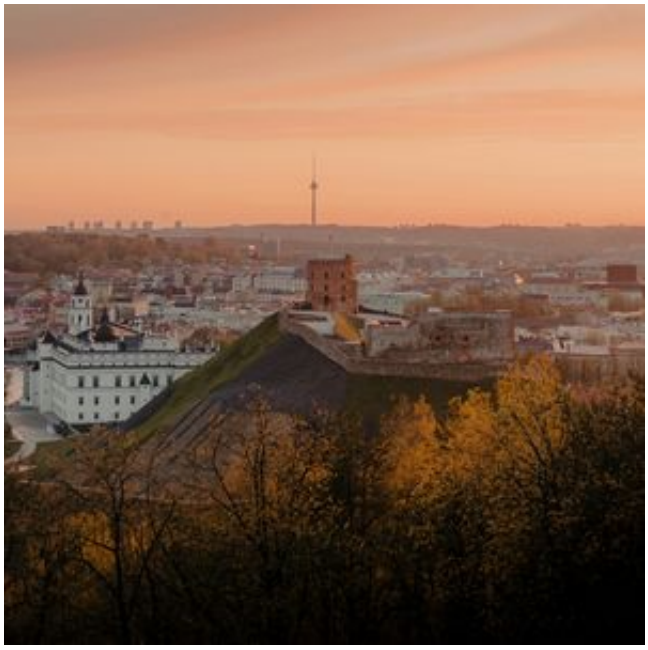
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Jill Evans

Member

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