

Ausschreitungen in Jerusalem 2014 11 05 EU foreign affairs chief Mogherini calls for Palestinian state

The European Union's top foreign affairs official called for the establishment of a Palestinian state Saturday while visiting the Gaza Strip. Federica Mogherini said Gaza and the world "cannot afford" another war. Federica Mogherini in Gaza 08.11.2014

Amid surging Israeli-Palestinian tensions and near-daily clashes in East Jerusalem, European Union foreign affairs chief Federica Mogherini (above, center) on Saturday called for the creation of a Palestinian state.

"We need a Palestinian state - that is the ultimate goal and this is the position of all the European Union," Mogherini said as she visited UN facilities for Palestinians whose houses were destroyed during the most recent Israeli bombing campaign targeting Hamas militants in Gaza this summer.

The nearly two-month war between Israel and Hamas in July and August resulted in the deaths of 2,140 mainly civilian Palestinians and more than 70 Israelis.

"It is not only the people of Gaza that can't afford having a fourth war, all the world cannot afford this," Mogherini said.

Israeli-Palestinian tensions have soared in recent days as far-right Jewish groups have attempted to secure prayer rights at the Al-Aqsa compound in East Jerusalem, which is holy to Jews and Muslims alike.

"We cannot just sit and wait. If we sit and wait [the conflict] will go on for another 40 years. We have to have action now," Mogherini said. Ausschreitungen in Jerusalem 05.11.2014

Israeli-Palestinian tensions have risen sharply in recent days with near-daily clashes in flashpoint neighborhoods

Europe increasingly frustrated

Mogherini's comments also come amid growing European frustration with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has dismissed international charges that Israel's alleged settlement activity in East Jerusalem is detrimental to peace efforts.

In late October, Sweden became the second Western European country to recognize Palestine, after Iceland. Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman called the move "a very unfortunate decision" and Israel recalled its ambassador to Sweden shortly afterward.

In the United Kingdom, lawmakers voted overwhelmingly for a motion declaring "that the government should recognize the state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel."

And in France, socialist lawmakers said they are preparing a parliamentary motion calling on the government to recognize Palestine as well. "The [National] Assembly asks the French government to use recognition of the state of Palestine as an instrument to obtain a final settlement of the conflict," the provisional motion read according to Agence France Presse.

bw/nm (AFP, dpa)