

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the Report of the Sharm-el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee**

The European Union welcomes the publication of the Report of the Sharm-el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee (the Mitchell Report), and fully endorses its recommendations. Like the Jordanian-Egyptian initiative, the Mitchell Report is a realistic and balanced proposal to work from, in order to restore calm in the Middle East and relaunch the Peace Process.

The Union urges the parties to faithfully adhere to the recommendations contained in the Report. In particular, the Union expects the parties to take immediate and unconditional steps to cease all violence, to resume security cooperation and to exchange confidence-building measures, including a halt to settlement activities. These are all important elements for a resumption of negotiations, which should then follow. Negotiations should be based on international law, in particular UN Resolutions 242 and 338, and the principle of land for peace.

The Mitchell Report and the Egyptian-Jordanian initiative have provided the parties with the means to break the vicious circle of violence. The Union expects both parties to do their utmost to stop violence and find a negotiated solution at this critical juncture. The Union stands ready to assist the parties.

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