

PRESS RELEASE

206/20

03/04/2020

Declaration by the High Representative Josep Borrell on behalf of the EU on the UN Secretary General's appeal for an immediate global ceasefire

The European Union strongly supports the appeal by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres for an immediate global ceasefire in light of the global coronavirus pandemic.

The fight against this global pandemic, which is taking so many lives and challenging the functioning of our societies, is an unprecedented challenge that requires global unity, cooperation, solidarity and compassion.

The challenges that the world was facing before the outbreak of the virus remain. The pandemic will most likely exacerbate some of them.

Now, more than ever, is the time to agree on a worldwide truce, to stop all armed conflicts and immediately halt the fighting. Terrorist groups, as designated by the United Nations, should not be allowed to take advantage of that truce. We urge all those involved in armed conflicts anywhere in the world to engage in efforts to find a political solution to the conflict. We also urge all warring parties to comply fully with International Humanitarian Law and guarantee unimpeded access for humanitarian aid. This is even more vital in light of the coronavirus pandemic. Now is the time for international solidarity. Now is the time to devote all our energy and resources to fight the world's common challenge – the coronavirus. It is time to focus on global health. Only together can we protect the most vulnerable people in our societies, both medically and economically, from this virus and the human suffering that it brings.

The European Union also stresses that sanctions should not impede the delivery of essential equipment and supplies necessary to fight the coronavirus and limit its spread worldwide.

The European Union underlines that UN and EU sanctions provide for humanitarian exceptions. Through application of these exceptions, the EU and its Member States will ensure that these sanctions do not obstruct the global fight against COVID-19, while stressing that they continue to play an indispensable role in countering breaches of international law, proliferation, staunching the flow of arms into war zones, combatting human rights abuses, and targeting spoilers of peace processes. The EU also encourages other jurisdictions to provide the necessary clarifications to ensure that their respective sanctions are no obstacle to the global fight against the pandemic.

Press office - General Secretariat of the Council

Rue de la Loi 175 - B-1048 BRUSSELS - Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319

press@consilium.europa.eu - www.consilium.europa.eu/press