
EU DIVISIONS OVER ISRAEL-PALESTINE LEAVE BRUSSELS POWERLESS AS CONFLICT WORSENS

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EU foreign affairs ministers on Tuesday will discuss the seemingly urgent question of what their governments and Brussels can do to help end the latest deadly violence between Israel and the Palestinians, which has been raging for more than a week. But top officials, diplomats and experts on the Middle East say the answer has been known for years: nothing.

Josep Borrell, the EUs foreign policy chief, convened the special videoconference of ministers after issuing repeated statements in recent days imploring an end to the rocket fire against Israeli civilians by Hamas, and urging that Israel act proportionately and avoid civilian casualties.

But EU countries have long been ferociously divided over the Israel-Palestine question, as was clear on Sunday when the EU ambassador to the United Nations, Olof Skoog, delivered a statement to the Security Council condemning the violence but was prevented from speaking on behalf of its member states. Hungary, an ally of Israel, blocked the statement.

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