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## **Holy Land: evacuation of civilians from Khan Younis area. EU, “deep concern, humanitarian crisis”**

The European Union is “deeply concerned” about the Israeli army order to evacuate 250,000 civilians from the area of Khan Younis, according to a joint statement by High Representative Josep Borrell and Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič. Special attention is paid to patients of the European Hospital – one of the few still partially functioning hospitals in southern Gaza – who have been relocated to other facilities, while staff are trying to save the equipment. This will worsen overcrowding and shortages in the already overwhelmed remaining hospitals. “Forced evacuations are creating a humanitarian crisis within the crisis” affecting nearly 1.9 million people displaced within the Strip, the European leaders say. “There are no facilities to accommodate people, and humanitarian partners struggle to meet the immense needs of the newly displaced”, they denounce. And turning to Israel, they reiterate that “for evacuations not to amount to prohibited forcible transfers”, Israel must guarantee “safety in transit and proper accommodation in areas of refuge”. Furthermore, Israel is “responsible for guaranteeing that displaced persons are able to return to their homes, or areas of habitual residence, once hostilities end”. A ceasefire is all the more important now, the leaders conclude, to allow humanitarian assistance to Gaza and the release of all hostages.

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