

The Spanish Presidency of the EU condemns the attack and the deaths caused

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Passengers of the 'Mavi Marmara' ship, part of the flotilla carrying humanitarian aid to Gaza attacked by Israel. EFE

On Monday the Spanish Presidency of the EU condemned the Israeli attack on the "Freedom Fleet", a group of six boats carrying humanitarian aid to Gaza.

The President of the Spanish Government, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, has described as 'serious' and 'worrying' the events which took place early this morning in international waters, close to Gaza, when various ships carrying humanitarian aid were attacked by the Israeli army.

The Spanish Secretary of State for the EU, Diego López Garrido, condemned the events and added that the Spanish Presidency considers the deaths caused by the Israeli attack on the "Freedom Fleet" to be "unacceptable".

The Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs has today summoned the Israeli Ambassador in Spain, Rafael Schutz, to ask for an explanation of the "extremely serious" attack on the "Freedom Fleet".

"We will of course be investigating" the matter, added the Secretary of State who described the events as "extremely serious".

Today, the head of European diplomacy, Catherine Ashton, requested that the Israeli authorities 'thoroughly investigate' the assault on the 'Freedom Flotilla', according to sources from her cabinet.

The Spanish government 'fully supports' this request by the EU for Israel to conduct an investigation and for responsibility to be established.

In a communiqué from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Spanish government 'condemns the military action', 'believes it to have been completely out of proportion', and reiterates its request for the Gaza blockade to be lifted.

The High Representative for the EU does not wish to interpret the incident in political terms nor indicate guilty parties at this time, indicated one of her spokespersons, who added that she does however wish to express her 'sadness' in the face of this incident and has sent her condolences to the families of those who killed or were wounded in the attack.

According to the Israeli TV channel Canal 10, at least 14 people have died and dozens have been injured by the attack on the group of boats transporting more than 750 people with humanitarian aid for Gaza.