



EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 20 September 2012  
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## **Joint statement by the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, OIC Secretary General, Arab League Secretary General, and Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union**

As representatives of four regional organizations, we want to send a message today of peace and tolerance.

We share a profound respect for all religions. We are united in our belief in the fundamental importance of religious freedom and tolerance. We condemn any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to hostility and violence. While fully recognizing freedom of expression, we believe in the importance of respecting all prophets, regardless of which religion they belong to.

The anguish of Muslims at the production of the film insulting Islam, posting of its trailer on the internet and other similar acts, is shared by all individuals and communities who refuse to allow religion to be used to fuel provocation, confrontation and extremism.

We condemn any message of hatred and intolerance.

We know that the behaviour of small groups of people does not speak for the larger communities from which they hail; but the damage they can inflict can be considerable. We must ensure that the recent events do not undermine the relationships of trust and respect we have built up over so many years among our peoples, communities and states. The international community cannot be held hostage to the acts of extremists on either side.

## **P R E S S**

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We condemn the recent attacks on diplomatic missions resulting in tragic loss of lives. Violence can have no place in our societies and offensive speech cannot be met with violent acts as it will only create a spiral of brutality from which we will all suffer. Reason rather than rage must prevail. So today we call for an end to violence wherever it has appeared. We call for peace and restraint.

We reiterate our strong commitment to take further measures and to work for an international consensus on tolerance and full respect of religion, including on the basis of UN Human Rights Council resolution 16/18. We further call on all leaders, whether they be political, secular or religious, to promote dialogue and mutual understanding. And we will continue our efforts to show that what joins us together across regions and religions is far greater than what separates us.

The only answer to the darkness of intolerance and ignorance is the light of mutual respect, tolerance and dialogue.

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