



Plenary sitting

B9-0069/2024

15.1.2024

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, the need to reach a ceasefire and the risks of regional escalation
(2024/2508(RSP))

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on behalf of The Left Group

B9-0069/2024

European Parliament resolution on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, the need to reach a ceasefire and the risks of regional escalation (2024/2508(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on Israel and Palestine, in particular that of 14 December 2022 on the prospects of the two-state solution for Israel and Palestine¹,
- having regard to the statements of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the situation in Palestine/Israel, in particular that of 12 November 2023 on humanitarian pauses in Gaza,
- having regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional protocols thereto,
- having regard to UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 on the partition of Palestine,
- having regard to UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 on the principles for reaching a final settlement and the returning of Palestine refugees to their homes,
- having regard to UN General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 on assistance to Palestine refugees,
- having regard to subsequent UN resolutions on the situation in Palestine/Israel,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,
- having regard to the UN General Assembly Resolution of 12 December 2023 on Gaza entitled ‘Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations’,
- having regard to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998,
- having regard to the statements of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967,
- having regard to the Oslo Accords between the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization of 1993 and 1995,
- having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement of 2000 establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the

¹ OJ C 177, 17.5.2023, p. 73.

State of Israel, of the other part², in particular Article 2 thereof,

- having regard to the statement of the UN Secretary-General of 9 October 2023 appealing for an end to ‘the vicious cycle of bloodshed, hatred and polarisation’, and to his further statements regarding the catastrophic situation for civilians in Gaza,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas 7 October 2023 was the deadliest single day in Israel’s history, when Palestinian armed groups, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, carried out an unprecedented attack, broke through the Gaza-Israel barrier and mounted an attack on Israeli military and civilian targets; whereas Israel responded militarily; whereas at the end of the engagement, 1 200 people in Israel, most of them civilians, had been killed and more than 200 had been taken hostage, of whom 132 are still being held captive more than three months on;
- B. whereas since 8 October 2023, the Israeli army has been conducting a war with bombardments from the air, sea and land operations on the Gaza Strip, one of the world’s most densely populated areas, and has killed over 23 000 Palestinians, 70 % of whom are women and children; whereas around 60 000 people have been injured, while more than 8 000 are missing; whereas about 85 % of the 2.2 million people who make up the population of Gaza have been displaced and have no access to basic services, health, water, food and electricity; whereas according to the non-governmental organisation Save the Children, at least 10 000 children – or one per cent of the total child population of the Gaza Strip – have been killed; whereas 79 journalists and media workers and at least 146 humanitarian workers have been killed;
- C. whereas since the beginning of the war, the illegal land, air and sea blockade that Israel has imposed on the Gaza Strip since 2007, with devastating consequences for the population, has been severely tightened to block electricity, food and fuel from entering the territory; whereas the Gaza Strip was already in a situation of humanitarian crisis before the war owing to Israel’s 17-year blockade, with about 80 % of the population reliant on humanitarian aid, with 44 % of households suffering food insecurity and another 16 % at risk of food insecurity; whereas the indiscriminate bombings and blockade of aid by Israel have caused an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, which is leading to thousands of women, men and children dying from hunger, disease and a lack of medicine and aid; whereas as denounced by the UN Secretary-General, ‘four out of five of the hungriest people anywhere in the world are in Gaza’; whereas a UNICEF survey from 26 December 2023 found that an increasing number of children in Gaza are not having their basic nutritional needs met; whereas about 90 % of children under the age of two in Gaza are consuming food from two or fewer food groups; whereas the nutrition of pregnant and nursing women has also been severely compromised, with 25 % consuming only one type of food, and almost 65 % only two types;
- D. whereas the Israeli airstrikes have indiscriminately targeted civilian infrastructure and destroyed schools, hospitals, mosques, churches and private homes and buildings; whereas thousands of families have been displaced multiple times, with at least half a

²OJ L 147, 21.6.2000, p. 3.

million Palestinians having no homes to return to; whereas according to the UN, as of 30 December 2023, nearly 70 % of Gaza's housing units had been damaged or destroyed, 352 schools had been damaged and the remaining educational facilities were providing shelter to those displaced; whereas half of Gaza's hospitals are out of service, while civilian infrastructure, factories and businesses have suffered significant damage;

- E. whereas since 7 October 2023 in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, 332 Palestinians have been killed, including 84 children, and 4 157 Palestinians, including 630 children, have been injured; whereas the number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in 2023 – 507 – marks the highest number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank since the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) began recording casualties in 2005; whereas at least 1 257 people, including 582 children, have been displaced amid settler violence and access restrictions; whereas according to OCHA, a further 915 Palestinians have been displaced following the demolition of their homes or their destruction during the operations by Israeli forces;
- F. whereas the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has denounced the fact that Israel is targeting its headquarters, offices and infrastructure; whereas at least 146 UNRWA staff members have been killed in the Israeli bombings, the highest ever death toll for any UN agency in a war; whereas the most recent reports from UNRWA indicate that 132 installations have been damaged, including 63 that took direct hits from the Israeli army, while 52 schools sustained damage and 53 took direct hits; whereas more than 1.7 million people are now sheltering in facilities belonging to UNRWA;
- G. whereas according to OCHA, humanitarian partners' ability to respond to extensive needs in Gaza is being curtailed by recurring denials of access for aid deliveries and the lack of coordinated safe access by the Israeli authorities; whereas the rate of access denials by Israel during the last month marks a 'significant deterioration' compared to December 2023; whereas between 1 and 10 January 2024, only three out of 21 planned deliveries of food, medicines, water and other life-saving items to the north of Wadi Gaza got through;
- H. whereas different non-governmental organisations have denounced the fact that Israel is using white phosphorus in its attacks, which is prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention; whereas according to a US intelligence report quoted by CNN, 40-45 % of the 29 000 air-to-surface munitions dropped on Gaza were so-called imprecise dumb bombs, unguided munitions that can pose a greater threat to civilians, particularly in densely populated territories such as Gaza;
- I. whereas fighting and tensions are growing on the Lebanese border, as Hezbollah has fired rockets towards Israel and Israel has launched airstrikes at Lebanese territory; whereas Israeli forces have launched missile attacks on airports in Syria, rendering the Damascus and Aleppo airports inoperative; whereas an extraterritorial drone strike from Israel on southern Beirut in Lebanon killed several Hamas leaders, including Saleh al-Aroui, the deputy leader of the group's political wing and founder of the military wing, the Qassam Brigades; whereas Houthi rebels in Yemen have attacked commercial ships heading towards Israel in the Red Sea and launched attacks against the US-led coalition

which has sent military naval units to the area to protect Israel; whereas the US, the UK and their allies have launched multiple missile attacks on Yemen against the Houthi, with the risk of escalating the conflict;

- J. whereas the current situation poses a major threat to security in the region as a whole; whereas it also has implications for peaceful coexistence within other countries, including EU Member States;
- K. whereas the UN Secretary-General has stated that the upsurge in violence did not arrive in a vacuum, but grew out of a long-standing conflict, with a decades-long military occupation and no political end in sight; whereas 2023 was characterised by increasing tensions and violence in the context of the ongoing military occupation of Palestine; whereas before the ongoing attack, 2023 was already the deadliest year for Palestinians since the UN started collecting data; whereas there are more than 8 000 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons, including hundreds of women and children;
- L. whereas since 1967, Israel has been occupying the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, as well as the Golan Heights; whereas Israel has been building and expanding settlements in the occupied areas, which constitutes a war crime; whereas Israel, in contravention of UN resolutions, has declared Jerusalem its eternal and undivided capital, an act supported mainly by the US; whereas the Israeli authorities refuse to fulfil their obligations as an occupying power in accordance with the Geneva Conventions and continue to deny basic needs, such as medical supplies or shelter, to the Palestinian population; whereas the State of Israel has imposed a system with different sets of rights and obligations on the people inhabiting one single territory according to their national or ethnic origin; whereas this system has been repeatedly described as apartheid by Palestinian, Israeli and international organisations;
- M. whereas the European Council failed to issue a joint statement at its summit in Brussels on 15 December 2023; whereas the EU must play a role in addressing the ongoing conflict; whereas relations between the EU and Israel are based on the 2000 Association Agreement, which states in its Article 2 that the agreement is based on respect for human rights and democratic principles;
- N. whereas Israel has been associated to the EU's research and innovation framework since 1996, participating in key programmes such as Horizon Europe; whereas the EU has awarded contracts worth EUR 59 million to Israeli military technology companies; whereas the value of EU arms sales to Israel is estimated to be around EUR 200 million per year; whereas additional military aid has been promised by EU and NATO Member States to Israel in the context of the current situation;
- O. whereas the Presidents of the European Parliament and the Commission travelled to Israel to express solidarity with the Israeli people, without having received a mandate from an extraordinary sitting of Parliament or from the Council and therefore exceeded their roles and responsibilities; whereas they did not express a word of compassion for the Palestinian civilians killed and provided political support and justification for the Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip;
- P. whereas individual Members of the European Parliament have been banned from entering Israeli and Palestinian territory by the Israeli authorities, including during

official European Parliament visits; whereas the European Parliament has been banned by the Israeli authorities from visiting the Gaza Strip for over a decade;

1. Calls for an immediate, permanent and unconditional ceasefire;
2. Calls for the release of all Israeli hostages and of all Palestinian administrative detainees and political prisoners;
3. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the indiscriminate bombing of Gaza, the massacre of Palestinian civilians, mostly women and children, and the deliberate targeting of UN workers, journalists, doctors and artists by the occupying Israeli army; denounces the terrible humanitarian situation in Gaza, which is the result of three months of war crimes and continuous and deliberate violations of international humanitarian law by Israel and condemns Israel's policy of collective punishment against the people of Gaza, which is contrary to international humanitarian law and must be stopped; condemns the Israeli authorities' threats against the people of Gaza; highlights that forced expulsion of a population is a war crime; stresses that any humanitarian aid in Gaza has to be planned in such a way as to prevent such a forced expulsion; expresses concern about the regional implications of the flight of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip; deplores the Israeli military's repeated unlawful attacks on medical facilities, personnel and transport, which are further destroying the Gaza Strip's healthcare system, and calls for these attacks to be investigated as war crimes;
4. Highlights that anyone who commits war crimes, which run counter to international humanitarian law, in Israel or Palestine must be held accountable before a court of law; reiterates its firm condemnation of the deliberate killings of civilians by Hamas;
5. Stresses that the humanitarian crisis currently under way in the Gaza Strip is not simply a side effect of the war, but the direct result of war crimes committed deliberately and systematically, which could amount to genocidal acts against Palestinians in Gaza, as intended by the extreme-right Israeli Government; condemns the Israeli Government's use of the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare in Gaza, also a war crime; urges the Israeli forces to stop deliberately blocking the entry of all but a trickle of water, food and fuel, while wilfully impeding humanitarian assistance from entering and reaching all parts of Gaza, apparently laying waste to agricultural areas and depriving the civilian population of supplies indispensable to their survival; stresses that the Israeli authorities, as the occupying power over Gaza under international law, have a duty to ensure that the basic needs of the population are met; urges the Israeli authorities to guarantee access for humanitarian aid, food, water and fuel, and for health and humanitarian workers to Gaza without restrictions, guaranteeing their safety and security; underlines that the blockade and bombing of Gaza and other attacks by Israeli forces on civilian populations are a form of collective punishment and represent indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks that could amount to war crimes;
6. Highlights the complicity of the US Government and of some European countries with the Israeli Government and the onslaught against and starvation of the civilian population of Gaza and asks them to call for an immediate ceasefire;
7. Welcomes the demonstrations by thousands of people around the world against the war, calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and for an end to the occupation, to the

system of apartheid and to the ethnic cleaning of the Palestinian people; denounces the decisions of some governments, including in the EU, to limit the right to demonstrate and to criminalise solidarity with the Palestinian people;

8. Supports the initiative of the Republic of South Africa to refer Israel to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for the alleged genocidal acts it is committing in Gaza; calls for the Member States and the European Union to support the investigation by the International Criminal Court into war crimes committed by all parties in Israel and Palestine; underlines that the ordering by the ICJ of provisional measures and their implementation by Israel would offer immediate protection of civil populations and spare innocent lives;
9. Highlights the need to achieve a lasting and fair peace in the region in line with international law and human rights and based on UN resolutions; urges the international community, the EU, its Member States and countries in the region to take immediate action to prevent further escalation and calls for negotiations to take place under the auspices of the UN; stresses that international conflict resolution needs to take place, not through retaliation, but through the enforcement of international law to ensure the end of the occupation in Palestine and safety and peace for both peoples;
10. Calls for the EU, its Member States and countries in the region to ensure that the people of Gaza receive the humanitarian aid they need and calls for the creation of humanitarian corridors to ensure their access to healthcare, shelter and safety; condemns the decision by the Israeli Government to further tighten the blockade and deprive the people of Gaza of vital supplies, including water, food and electricity, and calls for the reversal of this decision;
11. Calls on the Commission and the Council to activate the Temporary Protection Directive³ in order to provide immediate access to protection for all refugees from Palestine, while ensuring their right to return;
12. Highlights the important role that EU aid plays in the Middle East and in Palestine, particularly in key areas such as access to clean water and energy; highlights the need to increase humanitarian aid, particularly in the area of healthcare, to address the ongoing humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip; denounces the fact, however, that increasing aid is useless if the Israel Government is not forced to put an end to the indiscriminate bombardments and to allow the entry of humanitarian aid and the opening of the crossing points;
13. Stresses that humanitarian actors and journalists must be protected and strongly condemns Israel's killing of journalists and humanitarian and health workers, and the targeting of civilian infrastructure, including schools and hospitals managed by international humanitarian organisations; reaffirms UNRWA's essential contribution to the livelihoods of Palestinian refugees in a difficult context of increasing humanitarian and development needs; calls, in recognition of its status as the largest UN agency operating in Gaza, for support to UNRWA's emergency appeal to address the pressing

³ Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof (OJ L 212, 7.8.2001, p. 12).

humanitarian needs in the Gaza Strip and for the expedited release of all pending funds to UNRWA; urges the EU and the international community to continue supporting UNRWA, both politically and financially, responding to its appeal to address the urgent and immense humanitarian needs;

14. Reminds the Israeli authorities of their obligations as an occupying power under the Geneva Conventions, including those towards the Palestinian civilian population that have not been met;
15. Urges the Israeli authorities to end the illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip; calls on the Israeli authorities to allow humanitarian workers, journalists and other international stakeholders to access the Gaza Strip; calls on the UN to deploy personnel to the Gaza Strip once the situation allows for it and to monitor and report on the human rights situation there; regrets that some countries have chosen to stop their aid to Gaza at a time when more aid is needed; calls on the Member States to increase their aid to the Palestinian people;
16. Is highly concerned about the dramatic worsening of the situation for the Palestinian population in the West Bank and East Jerusalem; condemns the Israeli Government for handing out thousands of firearms to radical settlers and blames the government for the killings and displacement of Palestinians that are now being committed by fanatical settlers;
17. Calls for the EU to immediately halt all transfers of arms and military technology to Israel and all other parties to the conflict, in accordance with Common Position 2008/944/CFSP⁴;
18. Expresses its deep concern about the risk of an escalation of the conflict; stresses how the unilateral involvement of major international and regional actors has contributed over the years to the destabilisation of the Middle East and North Africa region, in particular with illegal wars and the fomenting of sectarian conflicts, as occurred in Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen; condemns all military actions against third countries that risk escalating the given conflict, including those carried out by the US and the UK against Yemen; urges the United States and its allies to withdraw their military forces from the area, as they are contributing to further escalation and destabilisation in the region;
19. Condemns all declarations and acts that increase the risk of a regional escalation of the conflict, including threats by the Israeli Government to wage war against Lebanon; calls for the Member States and the European Union to condemn all declarations and acts that put the stability of the region in jeopardy and to prevent the escalation of the conflict by all means;
20. Highlights the need to achieve a lasting and fair peace in the region in line with international law, the recognition of the right of return for all Palestinian refugees and full respect for human rights; underlines that this can only happen by putting an end to the occupation and re-launching the peace process under the protection of the international community, and recalls the EU's long-standing support for a negotiated

⁴ Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008 defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment (OJ L 335, 13.12.2008, p. 99).

two-state solution on the basis of the 1967 borders with two sovereign, democratic states living side by side in peace and guaranteed security and in full respect of international law; calls, therefore, for the EU and the Member States to recognise the State of Palestine with the 1967 borders and its capital in East Jerusalem, and to respect the right of return of Palestinian refugees, as defined in UN resolutions; calls for the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied territories, including from all illegal settlements;

21. Stresses that the EU-Israel Association Agreement is, according to its Article 2, based on the fulfilment of human rights and that human rights are a guiding principle; calls for the immediate suspension of the Association Agreement until the attacks on the Gaza Strip stop and there are clear guarantees on bringing an end to the systematic violations of the human rights of the Palestinian population;
22. Believes that the EU must denounce the system of apartheid against Palestinians; urges all Member States to stop their arms trade with Israel and calls for the EU and its Member States to end the supply of technology and arms to Israel, which allows it to maintain its system of apartheid, to institute a ban on Israeli settlement products and to use all political and diplomatic means to pressure Israel into ending its apartheid against Palestinians;
23. Expresses solidarity with all the people and political forces on both sides calling for human rights, democracy, equality and peace, as well as with all those defending them globally; expresses solidarity with the political and social forces in Israel calling for a ceasefire and for an end to the occupation;
24. Expresses great concern over reports from Israel of harassment, violent arrests, the suspension of students from higher education institutions, the suspension of members of the Knesset and the suspension and dismissal of employees and workers, both Arab and Jewish, in an attempt to silence critical parts of society; condemns the openly racist and supremacist nature of statements issued by different members of the Israeli Government and authorities and their support for the forced deportation of Palestinians, the illegal expansion of settlements and the crimes against civilians committed by settlers in the West Bank and the war crimes in Gaza; condemns the decision of the Israeli Government to step up the purchase and distribution of weapons to civilians and settlers, fomenting a climate of hatred and discrimination towards the Arab minority in Israel and violence against the Palestinian population in the West Bank; denounces calls from Israeli officials for the use of nuclear arms against the Palestinians in Gaza; calls on the International Atomic Energy Agency to open an investigation, as this is an indirect recognition by Israel of being in possession of nuclear weapons;
25. Is concerned by the increase in antisemitic, Islamophobic and anti-Arab speeches, rallies and attacks directed against Jewish, Muslim and Arab people in Europe; calls for the EU and its Member States to protect its citizens and their institutions from all forms of racist violence and discrimination, including both antisemitism and Islamophobia; condemns the prosecution and banning of organisations for and symbols of solidarity with the Palestinian people; reiterates that the glorification of violence and of war crimes and the calls for the destruction of Palestine or Israel are absolutely unacceptable;

26. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President of the European Council, the President of the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the presidents of the parliaments of the Member States, the Knesset and the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean and the League of Arab States.