

Thursday 18 September 2014

P8_TA(2014)0029

Israel-Palestine after the Gaza war and the role of the EU**European Parliament resolution of 18 September 2014 on Israel-Palestine after the Gaza war and the role of the EU (2014/2845(RSP))**

(2016/C 234/08)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949,
 - having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
 - having regard to the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip of 18 September 1995,
 - having regard to the UN Security Council statement of 12 July 2014,
 - having regard to the Oslo Accords ('Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements') of 13 September 1993,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process of 30 August 2014, 16 December 2013, 14 May 2012, 18 July and 23 May 2011, and 8 December 2009,
 - having regard to the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) of 27 August 2014 on the ceasefire in Gaza,
 - having regard to the daily UNRWA situation reports,
 - having regard to the statement by the UN Security Council of 12 July 2014 and the statement by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of 13 July 2014,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on the promotion of compliance with international humanitarian law,
 - having regard to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols and to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the latest conflict in Gaza has caused loss of life and unacceptable suffering to the civilian population of both parties involved;
- B. whereas more than 2 000 Palestinians have been killed – a large majority of them civilians, including 503 children – and more than 10 000 Palestinians have been wounded in the Gaza Strip, while 66 Israeli soldiers and 6 Israeli civilians, including one child, have lost their lives and more than 500 Israelis have been wounded as a result of Operation Protective Edge by the Israeli Defence Forces and the firing of rockets by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups from Gaza into Israel; whereas this violent conflict has created a severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza;
- C. whereas a ceasefire agreement was reached on 26 August 2014, putting an end to seven weeks of hostilities in Gaza; whereas Egypt has made considerable efforts to broker this agreement;
- D. whereas, according to the ceasefire agreement, humanitarian aid should be allowed access to the Gaza Strip through crossings to Israel, the Rafah crossing should be opened, and the fishing zone should be extended to six miles off the coast of Gaza;

Thursday 18 September 2014

- E. whereas, if the truce holds, the parties should start talks on various subjects relating to the situation in the Gaza Strip at the end of September 2014; whereas these talks may include the disarmament of armed groups in Gaza, the return of the remains of two Israeli soldiers killed in the violent conflict, the release of Palestinian prisoners and the lifting or easing of the blockade of Gaza, including through the reconstruction of the seaport and the airport in the area;
 - F. whereas according to UNRWA and organisations on the ground, over 1 700 homes have been completely or partially destroyed and 40 000 others damaged, and 17 hospitals and health care clinics, 136 UNRWA schools, 60 mosques and 13 cemeteries have also been destroyed;
 - G. whereas whole neighbourhoods and vital infrastructure were flattened in Gaza, including the Gaza Power Plant which remains inoperable, resulting in electricity outages of 18 hours a day and some 450 000 people are still without access to municipal water due to damage or low pressure;
 - H. whereas Palestinian experts have estimated that the reconstruction of Gaza would cost close to USD 8 billion; whereas on 9 September 2014 the UN and the Palestinian Government called on international donors to provide USD 550 million for food aid, access to clean water, healthcare and education as immediate relief following the recent conflict; whereas an international donors' conference for the reconstruction of Gaza is planned in Egypt;
 - I. whereas 29 UNRWA school buildings continue to serve as collective centres for over 63 000 displaced persons;
 - J. whereas according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation, about 42 000 acres of cropland have sustained substantial direct damage and half of Gaza's poultry stock has been lost due to direct hits or lack of care owing to the reduced access to farmlands in border areas;
 - K. whereas it is the responsibility of the United Nations to launch an inquiry to evaluate the damages caused to its structures;
- 1. Expresses, once again, its condolences to all victims of the armed conflict and to their families; strongly condemns the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law;
 - 2. Welcomes the ceasefire agreement brokered by Egypt; recognises and commends the role played by Egypt in brokering a ceasefire; supports the Egyptian authorities in their continued work with the Israelis and Palestinians in order to establish a long-term ceasefire and distinguish its strategic role as a current and future mediator of a peaceful resolution; welcomes recent reports that the Egyptians are due to commence talks on a permanent ceasefire;
 - 3. Urges the EU to participate effectively in the urgent humanitarian aid effort and in the reconstruction of Gaza; calls on the EU to participate fully in the International Donors Conference on 12 October 2014 in Cairo;
 - 4. Stresses that providing full and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid to the population in the Gaza Strip must be an immediate priority; urges the international community to further intensify its efforts in this regard and to answer as a matter of urgency the emergency appeals for additional funding of UNRWA; calls on all actors in the region to facilitate humanitarian assistance reaching those in need of basic goods and services – with special regard to electricity services and water supplies, and the specific needs of children in particular – in Gaza without delay; expresses its concerns about the alleged cases of intentional blocking of humanitarian aid delivery to Gaza; underlines, at the same time, that EU humanitarian and financial assistance must fully benefit, in the most efficient way possible, the Palestinian people, and must never be used, directly or indirectly, for terrorist activities;

Thursday 18 September 2014

5. Welcomes the ongoing dialogue between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian National Consensus Government in various fields, and urges both parties to continue along this path; urges, at the same time, the Palestinian National Consensus Government to take over full authority in the Gaza Strip without delay, in order to avoid Gaza's sliding into chaos and lawlessness; calls, in this spirit, for the completion of the Palestinian reconciliation process, which should lead to the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections soon;
 6. Encourages key regional actors, notably Egypt and Jordan, to continue their efforts to calm the situation; reiterates its strong support for the two-state solution on the basis of the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as capital of both states, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security, which would imply the lifting of the blockade of Gaza; reiterates that settlements are illegal under international law and constitute an obstacle to peace; urges all EU institutions to encourage trade, cultural, scientific, energy, water and economic relations between Israel and its neighbours;
 7. Encourages an intra-Palestinian reconciliation between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority to work together to rebuild Gaza and to find a long-term political solution;
 8. Welcomes the readiness of the EU to contribute to a comprehensive and sustainable solution enhancing the security, welfare and prosperity of Palestinians and Israelis alike; takes positive note of the fact that the EU will develop options for effective and comprehensive action in the following areas: movement and access, capacity building, verification and monitoring, humanitarian relief and post-conflict reconstruction;
 9. Reiterates its support for the policy of peaceful resistance of President Mahmoud Abbas and condemns all acts of terrorism and violence; calls on the European Union and its Member States to reinforce their support for the leadership of President Abbas and his latest initiative to unblock the conflict;
 10. Stresses that the status quo in the Gaza Strip is unsustainable and plays into the hands of extremists, leading to constantly renewed cycles of violence; believes that there will be no long-term stability in Gaza without reconstruction and economic revival, which is undermined by the lack of free movement of people and goods; calls for a rapid reconstruction and rehabilitation of Gaza, and strongly supports the donors' conference to be held on 12 October 2014 in Cairo;
 11. Urges the EU and its Member States again to play a more active political role, also within the Quartet, in the efforts aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians; supports the High Representative in her efforts to create a credible perspective for re-launching the peace process;
 12. Applauds the fact that the EU is ready to support a possible international mechanism endorsed by the United Nations Security Council, including through the reactivation and possible extension of the scope and mandate of its EUBAM Rafah and EUPOL COPPS missions on the ground, extending to the launch of a training programme for Palestinian Authority customs personnel and police for redeployment in Gaza;
 13. Expresses its recognition of the immense importance of the work carried out by UNRWA and all its staff during and after the conflict; expresses its condolences to UNRWA and the families of the 12 staff members killed during the conflict; calls on the EU and international donors to significantly increase their support to cover the increased immediate needs of the affected population, which UNRWA has to meet;
 14. Stresses that it is imperative that the PA, the EU, Egypt and Jordan work, in a robust manner, towards ensuring that terrorist groups in Gaza and the West Bank cannot rearm and do not return to smuggle weapons, manufacture rockets and build tunnels;
 15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Quartet Envoy to the Middle East, the Knesset and the Government of Israel, the President of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian Legislative Council, the Parliament and Government of Egypt, and the Parliament and Government of Jordan.
-