

Resolution on the humanitarian situation in Gaza

2007/2636(RSP) - 11/10/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a joint resolution expressing its deepest concern about the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and its possible grave consequences. It stressed that human rights and international humanitarian law must be fully respected in the area, reiterating its call on all sides to renounce violence. Parliament called on Israel to fulfil its international obligations under the Geneva Conventions to guarantee the flow of humanitarian aid, humanitarian assistance and essential services, such as electricity and fuel, to the Gaza Strip.

It referred to the fact that, as a result of the embargo on the movement of people and goods, the massive devastation of public facilities and private homes, the disruption of hospitals, clinics and schools, the partial denial of access to proper drinking water, food and electricity, and the destruction of agricultural land, the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip has reached a catastrophic level. Calling for the lifting of the blockade of the Gaza Strip, and citing the fact that the Karni and Rafah border crossings have been closed for months. Parliament pointed out that the embargo on the movement of people and goods has further paralysed the economy and has significantly contributed to an extremely high rate of unemployment in the Gaza Strip. It called on Israel to ensure the movement of people and goods at Rafah, in compliance with the Agreement on Movement and Access and the EU Border Assistance Mission, as well as the movement of goods at Karni. The Council, the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Commission must face up to their full responsibility on the implementation of that agreement. Parliament called on Israel to guarantee the flow of financial assets to the Gaza Strip, which has been suspended since 25 September 2007, and considered that the lack of access to any financial assets has a serious impact on the economic, social and daily life of the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian Authority and Hamas were called upon to facilitate, despite the political deadlock, the functioning of the public institutions providing essential services and the operations of international humanitarian offices, agencies and organisations seeking to improve the living conditions of all Palestinians living in the area.

Parliament pointed out that the water and the water waste sectors are in a critical situation, and that situation may result in further environmental and humanitarian crises. The health system is under severe pressure and a significant proportion of the population is suffering from a lack of urgently needed treatment and medicines.

The Council and the Commission were asked to continue to guarantee essential humanitarian aid for the Palestinian population, with special regard to the specific needs of particularly vulnerable groups. Parliament urged both Council and Commission to ensure, in compliance with the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement with the State of Israel and the Euro-Association Interim Agreement with the Palestinian Authority, that international humanitarian law and human rights are fully respected in the area, including by non-state actors, in order to establish a humanitarian area;

In an oral amendment moved by the EPP-ED group, Parliament expressed its wish that the efforts to convene an international peace conference should contribute to achieving a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians, based on the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, the right of the State of Israel to live within secure and recognised borders, and the right to a viable state for Palestinians.