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Conflict in the Gaza Strip

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

The European Parliament, – having regard to its previous resolutions on the Middle East and in particular to that of 10 March 2010 on implementation of the Goldstone recommendations on Israel/Palestine(1), – having regard to the conclusions on Gaza of the Foreign Affairs Council meeting of 19 November 2012, – having regard to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, – having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, – having regard to resolution A/HRC/S-9/1 on the grave violations of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly due to the recent Israeli military attacks against the occupied Gaza Strip, adopted by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on 12 January 2009 at its 9th Special Session, – having regard to resolution A/HRC/RES/S-12/1 on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, adopted by the UNHRC on 16 October 2009 at its 12th Special Session, – having regard to the report of the EU Heads of Mission on East Jerusalem, – having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure, A. whereas after several weeks of escalation on the Gaza-Israel border and increasingly frequent rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip on southern Israel on 14 November 2012, the Israeli forces started a military operation called 'Pillar of Defence', consisting of airstrikes, including targeted killings of Palestinian military leaders, and bombardments, supported by the Israeli navy targeting Gaza's governmental buildings, security apparatus, and media offices, often located in highly populated areas; B. whereas more than 110 Palestinians were killed by these airstrikes, most of them civilians, including women and several children; whereas hospitals in Gaza are not able to cope with the emergency situation owing to the high number of injured people and the lack of medicines and adequate medical equipment; whereas electricity and water shortages have been reported in some areas of the Gaza Strip, exacerbating the already precarious situation; C. whereas rockets fired from the Gaza Strip caused the death of three Israeli civilians and injuries to more than 60, and reached as far as Tel Aviv and the city of Jerusalem; whereas this kind of long-range rocket has been supplied to Hamas and the Islamic Jihad by Iran; D. whereas this offensive is the first major military operation that Israel has launched since the 2008-09 attack on Gaza and the 2011 Arab uprisings; whereas Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has announced that Israel is ready to expand the conflict and send ground troops into Gaza if efforts to secure a ceasefire fail, authorising the mobilisation of up to 75 000 army reservists; whereas the current offensive could escalate into a wider regional conflict; whereas Israeli troops are massed along the border, raising fears of a ground offensive; E. whereas, in response to the Israeli attack, Egypt has withdrawn its ambassador from Tel Aviv and sent its Prime Minister on a solidarity visit to Gaza; F. whereas Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups have launched more than 10 000 rockets into southern Israel since 2001; whereas the UN Charter, notably Article 51 thereof, explicitly provides for the right of individual or collective self-defence in an armed attack; G. whereas, in spite of international calls, the Israeli blockade

on the Gaza Strip has been in place since 2007, with a deep humanitarian crisis affecting the whole population of the Strip and with limited improvements in the situation in the West Bank; H. whereas breaches of the Geneva Conventions permit the exercise of universal jurisdiction for serious international crimes, such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, torture and genocide; I. whereas negotiations between the two sides for a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been suspended; whereas the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank is constantly continuing, as proved by the recent publication of tenders for over 1 200 housing units in the settlements of Ramot and Pisgat Ze'ev; J. whereas the end of the expansion of settlements is regarded by the Palestinian side as a precondition for the resumption of talks; whereas Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories are illegal under international law and irreversibly jeopardise the two-state solution; K. whereas on 29 November President Mahmoud Abbas will submit to the UN an application for Palestine to become a 'non-member observer state'; whereas this status would improve the Palestinians' chances of joining UN agencies;
1. Strongly condemns the new outbreak of violence in and around the Gaza Strip, and calls on both parties to cease all hostilities, stop all military operations and immediately agree to a ceasefire; 2. Expresses its solidarity with all the victims, and calls for increased efforts to bring humanitarian assistance to all the people affected by the conflicts with regard, in particular, to the continuing plight of the population in the Gaza Strip; 3. Welcomes Egypt's efforts to negotiate a permanent truce between the parties, as well as the UN Secretary-General's mission to the region, and calls on the VP/HR to step up diplomatic pressure in order to support these actions and make them successful; 4. Calls for an immediate end to the Israeli blockade of Gaza with a view to facilitating access for international humanitarian assistance to the Strip and respecting the dignity and the right to a better future of the Palestinian population living there;
5. Warns that another Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip could have enormous consequences throughout the Middle East, adding to an already tense situation in the region; 6. Stresses that respect for international human rights and humanitarian law by all parties and in all circumstances remains an essential precondition for achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East; 7. Recalls that the right to individual or collective self-defence in an armed attack must be proportionate and can in no way rely on indiscriminate acts of retaliation that result in practice in collective punishments; 8. Reiterates its view that there is no alternative to a comprehensive negotiated settlement of the conflict leading to a two-state solution, with Israel and a Palestinian state living side by side within secure and internationally recognised borders;
9. Supports, in this connection, Palestine's bid to become a UN non-member observer, and considers this an important step in making Palestinian claims more visible, stronger and more effective; calls on the EU to speak with a single voice and to endorse this application, and urges the Member States to vote in favour of it at the UN General Assembly; 10. Calls once again for the freezing of all Israeli settlements in the West Bank in order, also, to pave the way for the resumption of constructive and substantial negotiations between the parties; 11. Reaffirms that the upgrading of relations between the EU and Israel must be strongly conditional upon strict respect for international human rights and humanitarian law, including the immediate lifting of the blockade on the Gaza Strip, a total freeze on all settlement constructions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and real commitments and actions aimed at a comprehensive peace settlement and the full implementation of the EC-PLO Interim Association Agreement; 12. 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 UN Secretary-General, the Quartet Envoy to the Middle East, the Israeli Government, the Knesset, the President of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Legislative Council and the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly bodies. (1) OJ C 349 E, 22.12.2010, p. 34.

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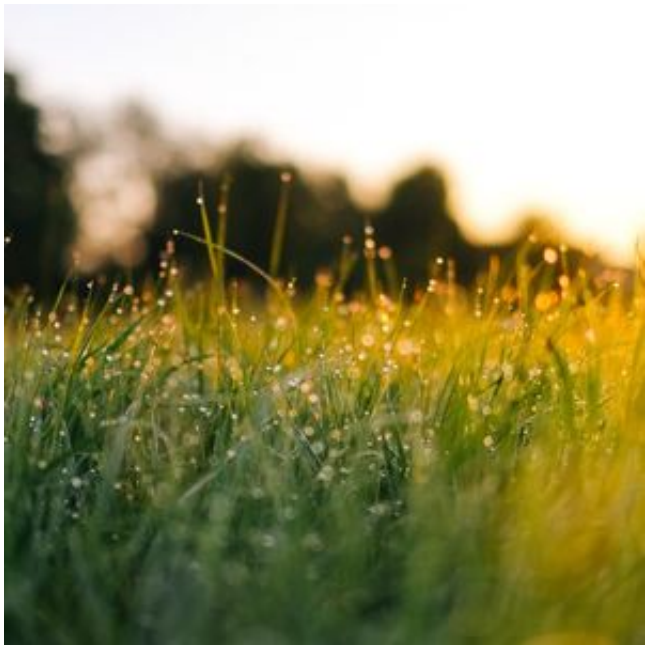
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