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Palestine, the raids of the Israeli forces on Palestinian TV stations

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution - debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions,
- having regard to the statement by the Spokesperson of the High Representative Catherine Ashton on the closure of two Palestinian television stations of 3 March 2012,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
- having regard to existing agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and to the Oslo Accords (Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements) of 1993,
- having regard to Article 122 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas, on 29 February 2012, Israel Defence Forces soldiers accompanying officials of the Israeli Ministry of Communication raided two Palestinian television stations, Wattan TV and Al-Quds University-affiliated Al-Quds Educational TV, and confiscated transmitters, computers, broadcasting equipment, cassettes, and administrative and financial documents; whereas several employees of Wattan TV were held for hours during this operation,

B. whereas the Israeli Ministry of Communication said following the raids that both television stations had been repeatedly warned that they used frequencies which violated agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, interfered with Israeli communication systems, and disturbed flight communications at Ben-Gurion International Airport in particular,

C. whereas the Palestinian Authority replied that Israeli accusations concerning the interruption of flight communications were false, that it had received no warnings from Israeli authorities, and that the two television stations were guilty of no violations of agreements between Israel and the PA, while it also underlined that the Israeli raids had breached these agreements, which require such issues to be resolved through consultation,

D. whereas Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad condemned the Israeli raid on the two Palestinian television stations as a blatant attack against the freedom of information which recalls Israeli practices in the beginning of the second intifada when occupation forces had raided and sabotaged many Palestinian media institutions, including Wattan TV, and said that the Palestinian response should entail immediate rebroadcast and continuation of work in both institutions,

E. whereas the European Union has worked with both Wattan TV and Al Quds Educational TV, which have been broadcasting for many years,

F. whereas intimidation of Palestinian media by Israeli authorities continues; whereas, on 20 November 2011, the Israeli Ministry of Communication ordered the closure of All for Peace, a radio station based in East Jerusalem and broadcasting from Ramallah in the West Bank; whereas Reporters Without Borders said that this radio station had been broadcasting programmes encouraging peace initiatives and dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians,

G. whereas the Oslo Agreement established an Israeli-Palestinian Joint Technical Committee to address any issues arising in the telecommunications field,

H. whereas Israeli raids on the two Palestinian television stations took place in Area A in the occupied Palestinian Territory, which is under Palestinian civilian and security administration and control,

1. Condemns the raid by Israeli Defence Forces soldiers and officials of the Israeli Ministry of Communication on Palestinian television stations Wattan TV and Al-Quds Educational TV and the confiscation of transmitters, computers, broadcasting equipment, cassettes, and administrative and financial documents on 29 February 2012;

2. Expresses its deep concern about the continuous intimidation of Palestinian media by Israeli authorities;

3. Supports the efforts of Palestinian authorities and the two television stations to restore all broadcasting equipment and continue interrupted broadcasting as soon as possible;

4. Calls on Israeli authorities to return all confiscated equipments and documents to the two television stations with no delay;

5. Calls on the Israeli authorities to fully respect the provisions of existing agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority when dealing with Palestinian media; stresses that the Israeli-Palestinian Joint

Technical Committee, established by the Oslo Accords, is the adequate mechanism to resolve any disputes in the telecommunications field;

6. Stresses again that continuous raids by the Israel Defense Forces in Area A, which is under Palestinian civilian and military administration and control, in the occupied Palestinian Territory undermine the authority and credibility of Palestinian authorities and security forces in the population, puts in jeopardy the internationally recognised success of Palestinian state-building efforts, and considerably hinder efforts aimed achieving peace between Israelis and Palestinians;

7. Calls on the Vice President/High Representative, the Council, and the Commission to put the issue of Israeli intimidation of Palestinian media on the agenda of EU-Israel dialogue and to take this into consideration in EU-Israel bilateral relations; reminds again, in this context, of the EU's obligation to ensure consistency between the different areas of its external action and between these and its other policies, as mentioned in Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union;

8. 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 Middle East Quartet Envoy, the Knesset and the Government of Israel, the President of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian Legislative Council.

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