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Palestinian self-determination central compass for all actions

Greens/EFA mission to the West Bank

Last week, an official Greens/EFA Group mission with 7 MEPs travelled to Palestine (West Bank). MEPs Villy Søvndal, Hannah Neumann, Tineke Strik, Catarina Vieira, Nela Riehl, Diana Riba i Giner and Ignazio Marino met with Palestinian civil society, researchers, international organisations and people in the streets of East Jerusalem, Ramallah, Hebron and Susya, discussed with them and witnessed their situation, which has critically deteriorated over the last two years. Yesterday, MEPs debated the developments in Palestine and Lebanon.

Greens/EFA **MEP Hannah Neumann**, Co-Chair of the Greens/EFA mission, comments:

"The ceasefire in Gaza is fragile and it is not delivering for Palestinians, who continue being killed, displaced and suffering the man-made humanitarian crisis. During our stay in the region we witnessed three days of heavy rain and wind. Families in Gaza have had to endure this weather in soaked tents. Israeli authorities continue to curtail aid and block the entry of tents and winter clothing. We need immediate access of international humanitarian organisations, international press and EU institutions to Gaza.

“We call on all parties to uphold the ceasefire, stop the killing of innocent civilians, for the withdrawal of the Israeli forces and the disarmament of Hamas. This requires genuine work on a political solution with direct participation of the Palestinian political representatives and civil society. Palestinians in the West Bank are ready and able to facilitate and support the governance, rebuilding and healing of Gaza: it should be the EU´s primary goal to ensure they get to take on that role. Most importantly, we need accountability for the gravest crimes being committed in Gaza, which the current peace plan leaves unaddressed.The Palestinian people need security and genuine self-determination . Only then can Israel and Palestine re-enter into serious dialogue about their future coexistence.”

Greens/EFA **MEP Villy Søvndal**, Co-Chair of the Greens/EFA mission, comments:

“In the shadows of the horrific happenings in Gaza, the Israeli far-right government and the Israeli army in collaboration with the settler movement are annexing the West Bank. Intensified military operations are causing death and displacement of Palestinians and unlawful appropriation of land, together with construction and expansion of illegal Israeli settlements are ensuring they have nowhere to go back to.

“A new alarming development we witnessed is the explosion of settler violence all across the occupied West Bank. The settlers are not individual perpetrators but a well organised movement who strategically and repeatedly attack Palestinians, their towns and villages, kill or steal cattle of Palestinian farmers and prevent them from harvesting their olives. Where in the past the Israeli military stood idly by settler violence , they now operate in collaboration with them to make life for Palestinians in the West Bank too dangerous, humiliating and costly to endure.

“We reiterate our urgent call on the Commission and Council to suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement , to impose a ban on European investments into illegal settlements and to prohibit the import of settler goods and services. This is not only required by international law , is the only consequential response to the creeping annexation of the West Bank. Palestinian self-determination and cohesion need to be the central compass for all EU action in and with Palestine in Gaza and the West Bank. “

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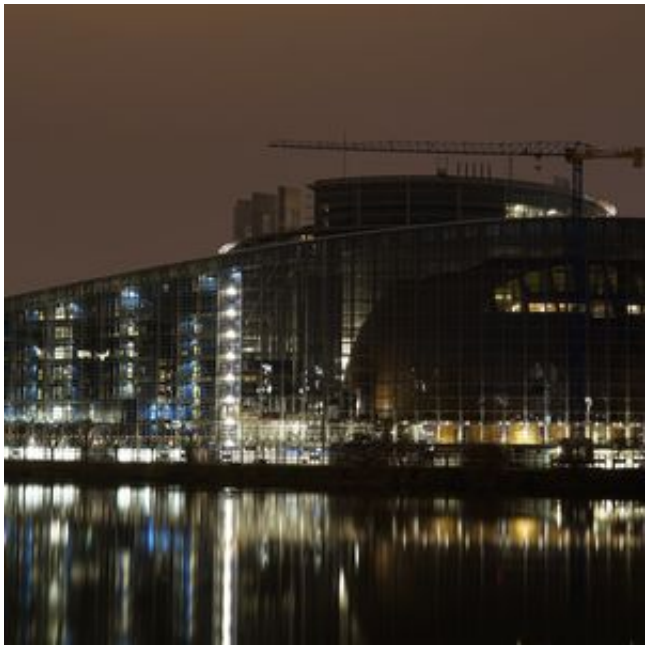

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