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Plenary sitting

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the escalation of violence between Israel and Palestine
(2014/2723(RSP))

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the escalation of violence between Israel and Palestine
(2014/2723(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Israel/Palestine conflict, in particular those of 22 November 2012 on the situation in Gaza¹ and of 14 March 2013 on the case of Arafat Jaradat and the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails²,
 - having regard to the mission of its ad hoc delegation on the detention of Palestinian prisoners and detainees of March 2014,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on the Middle East of 16 December 2013,
 - having regard to the statements by the spokesperson of the Vice-President of the Commission /High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on the situation in Israel and Palestine, including those of 5 and 17 June, and 2 and 8 July 2014,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on Promoting Compliance with International Humanitarian Law,
 - having regard to UN Security Council press statement of 12 July 2014 and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's statement of 13 July 2014,
 - having regard to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols thereto,
 - having regard to the UN human rights conventions to which Israel and Palestine are States Parties,
 - having regard to the latest reports adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on the Occupied Palestinian Territory,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, on 8 July 2014, the Israeli army launched a military operation in the Gaza Strip, consisting of mass airstrikes from land and sea, which includes targeted killings of Hamas operatives and other Islamist militants, and the bombardment of numerous sites throughout Gaza, mostly in densely populated areas; whereas Israel has massed thousands of troops on the border; whereas Prime Minister Netanyahu has not excluded the possibility of a full-scale ground operation; whereas Israeli ground troops carried out an incursion into Gaza on 13 July 2014;

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0454.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0102.

- B. whereas this military offensive follows a dramatic deterioration in the Israel/Palestine conflict, after the breakdown of the so-called Kerry peace initiative in April 2014, the abduction and killing of three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank on 12 June, an ensuing sweeping operation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and the retaliatory murder of a Palestinian teenager in East Jerusalem on 2nd July;
- C. whereas, according to Palestinian officials, more than 175 Palestinians have been killed by the ongoing Israeli offensive; whereas the United Nations estimates that more than 80 % of the dead are civilians, of whom 20 % are children; whereas at least 1 200 Palestinians have been wounded, of whom two-thirds are women and children; whereas the casualty figures are substantially higher than those reported after the first week of the 'Pillar of Defence' offensive by the Israeli forces in 2012; whereas hospitals in Gaza are unable to cope with the emergency situation owing to the high number of injured people and are reporting a dire shortage of medicines and medical equipment;
- D. whereas Israeli airstrikes have hit multiple civilian sites, including the central Gaza mosque and an Islamic home for the disabled; whereas over 940 homes have reportedly been damaged or destroyed; whereas 17 000 Palestinians in northern Gaza have sought refuge in UN facilities after Israel issued warnings of forthcoming air strikes; whereas 400 000 people are currently without electricity due to the military strikes and the population is also suffering from water shortages, and whereas this is exacerbating the already extremely precarious situation created by the protracted Israeli and Egyptian blockade of the territory;
- E. whereas Israeli officials have reported that around 1 000 rockets have been fired from the Gaza Strip; whereas rockets were also fired from Syria and Lebanon on 13 July 2014; whereas these rockets are reported to have reached as far as Haifa, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem; whereas the Israeli missile shield 'Iron Dome' has reportedly intercepted a large number of these rockets; whereas four Israelis are reported to have been injured since the beginning of the offensive but none have been killed; whereas Israeli authorities accuse Hamas of firing rockets indiscriminately at Israeli citizens from the Gaza Strip while hiding behind its own population and using civilians as human shields;
- F. whereas UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon expressed alarm at the hostilities in Gaza and warned that an Israeli ground offensive would 'undoubtedly increase the death toll and exacerbate civilian suffering in the Gaza Strip'; whereas the UN Security Council has called for a ceasefire and renewed peace talks; whereas the Security Council has so far failed to agree on a resolution on the current crisis;
- G. whereas Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has asked the United Nations to put Palestine under 'international protection' because of the worsening situation in Gaza;
- H. whereas, after an emergency meeting of the Arab League in Cairo on 14 July, the Egyptian president proposed a ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinian groups in the Gaza Strip; whereas the parties' response to this initiative is yet to be known; whereas US State Secretary Kerry will be travelling to Cairo on Tuesday 15 July [to be updated];
- I. whereas the UN Charter, notably Article 51 thereof, explicitly provides for the right of

individual or collective self-defence in an armed attack; whereas the indiscriminate firing of rockets constitutes a violation of humanitarian law;

- J. whereas Israel has accused Hamas of being responsible for the abduction and killing of three Israeli teenagers near settlements north of Hebron on 12 June, but has yet to produce evidence of this linkage; whereas Hamas has denied responsibility for this crime; whereas three Israeli Jews were reported on 14 July 2014 to have confessed to the murder of the Palestinian teenager in East Jerusalem, Mohammed Abu Khdeir, in reprisal to the killing of the three Israeli teenagers;
 - K. whereas Israeli security forces have been involved in a heavy-handed operation in the West Bank as a response to the abductions, including unlawful use of force, arbitrary arrests of over 700 Palestinians, of whom 450 currently remain detained and at least 150 in administrative detention, and punitive home demolitions; whereas this anti-Hamas campaign has been denounced by civil society organisations as amounting to collective punishment; whereas six Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces during the search operations, including several youths after clashes in refugee camps; whereas the offices of media companies Transmedia and Palmedia were raided and their equipment seized on 18 and 22 June 2014, due to their role in supporting alleged incitement to violence; whereas Human Rights Watch has estimated that 1 600 raids and searches of Palestinian homes, businesses and other locations have been conducted by the Israeli military since 12 June 2014;
 - L. 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 1.7 million population of the Strip;
 - M. whereas negotiations between the two sides for a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been suspended sine die, following the Israeli Government's rescinding of its commitment to release a last group of Palestinian prisoners in April 2014; whereas the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank is continuing, as most recently criticised by a VP/HR statement on 5 June 2014; whereas Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories are illegal under international law and undermine peace efforts and the viability of a two-state solution;
 - N. whereas an evaluation of the EU's cooperation with the Occupied Palestinian Territory and support to the Palestinian people, carried out on behalf of the Commission in May 2014, concluded that the current cooperation paradigm had reached its limits in the absence of a parallel political track by the EU to address the obstacles posed by the Israeli occupation and settlement policies and the political division of the West Bank and Gaza;
- 1. Strongly condemns the new cycle of violence in and around the Gaza Strip and denounces the odious attacks committed against civilians; calls for an end to the military operations and urges all parties to immediately agree to a ceasefire;
 - 2. Is deeply shocked by the dramatic loss of Palestinian lives, including many children, and by the devastation caused to the civilian infrastructure, resulting from the Israeli military strikes; expresses its solidarity with the victims, and calls for increased efforts

to bring humanitarian assistance to the besieged Gaza population affected by the conflict;

3. Warns that another Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip could have enormous consequences throughout the Middle East, adding to an already dramatic situation in the region;
4. Welcomes all efforts to negotiate a permanent truce between the parties and calls on the VP/HR and the Member States to step up diplomatic pressure in order to support these actions;
5. Considers that a mere call to respect the ceasefire brokered after the 2012 Israeli offensive against Gaza falls far short of a meaningful and long-term response; calls for an immediate end to the blockade of Gaza, notably with a view to allowing for unimpeded provision and distribution throughout Gaza of humanitarian assistance; is concerned, in this connection, at the insufficient EU funding planned for UNRWA for 2015 and calls for the support to be commensurate with the critical needs on the ground;
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; underlines the responsibility of Israel, as the occupying power, to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law and to exercise maximum restraint;
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; considers that continued firing into civilian areas after a possible unilateral ceasefire is unacceptable;
8. Denounces the odious murders of four teenagers in Hebron and Jerusalem, which have met with universal condemnation; stresses that the answer to such grisly crimes cannot be further scaremongering, incitement to hatred or collective punishment;
9. Urges all sides to resume peace talks in earnest; 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 based on the 1967 framework; calls once again, in this connection, 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;
10. Reiterates in this context that the appointment of Tony Blair as special envoy for the Middle East Quartet (United States, United Nations, European Union and Russia) has been an ill-fated symbol and has been marred by conflicts of interest, and that his mandate should be terminated; calls for a profound review of the role and relevance of the Quartet; insists on the importance of the UN playing an effective role in support of a resumption of the peace talks;
11. Welcomes the encouraging steps towards inter-Palestinian reconciliation and the

formation of a technocratic government, achieved prior to the Israeli military offensive; call on all Palestinian forces to resume efforts towards reconciliation; denounces efforts to undermine this potentially historical process and calls on the Israeli authorities to release all those arrested since 12 June in response to the abduction and killing of the three Israeli teenagers or charge them with a recognised criminal offense;

12. Calls for a comprehensive UN arms embargo on all parties in the region in order to prevent further violations of international humanitarian law and human rights;
13. Supports Amnesty International's call for a UN-mandated international inquiry into violations committed by both sides;
14. Calls on the EU to fulfil its responsibilities as an influential player and to take a clear and comprehensive peace initiative for the region, including by using all leverages at its disposal, notably legal, economic and diplomatic leverages, to promote the effective upholding of international humanitarian law and human rights law;
15. 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;
16. Is concerned that development projects in Gaza funded by the EU and Member States might have been destroyed or damaged by the Israeli offensive, and requests that the VP/HR report on the damage assessment by Commission services and, if confirmed, on plans to respond to the repeated destruction by Israel of EU-funded projects;
17. 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.