

European Parliament resolution of 15 March 2012 on Palestine: raids by Israeli forces on Palestinian TV stations (2012/2570(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the statement of 3 March 2012 by the spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton concerning the closure of two Palestinian television stations,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 8 December 2009, 13 December 2010 and 18 July 2011 on the Middle East peace process,
 - having regard to the EU-Israel Association Agreement, and in particular its Article 2,
 - having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
 - having regard to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which states: ‘Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers’,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
 - having regard to the Oslo Accords (Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements) of 1993 and to the other agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority,
 - having regard to the statements by the Middle East Quartet, in particular those of 23 September 2011 and 12 March 2012,
 - having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the EU has repeatedly confirmed its support for the two-state solution, with the state of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable state of Palestine living side by side in peace and security;
- B. whereas on 29 February 2012 in Ramallah, Israel Defence Forces soldiers and officials of the Israeli Ministry of Communication raided two Palestinian television stations, Wattan TV and Al Quds Educational TV, confiscated transmitters, computers, broadcasting equipment, cassettes and administrative and financial documents, and held employees for hours;
- C. whereas the Israel Ministry of Communication said in a statement that it had repeatedly warned both stations that they were using frequencies that violated Israeli-Palestinian agreements and interfered with communication and transmission systems in Israel; whereas a spokesman for the Israeli military said that the interference was affecting aircraft communications at Ben Gurion International Airport;
- D. whereas the Palestinian Authority (PA) replied that the Israeli accusations concerning the interruption of flight communications were false, adding that neither itself nor the two television stations had received any warning from the Israeli authorities, and that the two stations were not guilty of any violation of the agreements between Israel and the PA, while the Israeli raids had breached those agreements, which require such issues to be resolved through consultation;
- E. whereas the EU has worked with both stations, which have been broadcasting for many years;
- F. whereas the Oslo Accords established an Israeli-Palestinian Joint Technical Committee to address any issues arising in the telecommunications field;
- G. whereas the Israeli raids on the two Palestinian television stations took place in Area A, which is under Palestinian civilian and security administration and control;
1. Is deeply concerned by the raids in Ramallah conducted by Israeli security forces affecting the Palestinian television stations Wattan TV and Al Quds Educational TV;
 2. Supports the efforts of the Palestinian authorities and the two television stations to restore broadcasting

equipment and continue interrupted broadcasting; urges the Israeli authorities to immediately return the confiscated equipment and allow resumption of activity by the two TV stations;

3. Calls on the Israeli authorities to fully respect the provisions of the existing agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority when dealing with Palestinian media; urges the Palestinian Communications Ministry to work more closely with the Israeli authorities so as to ensure that all broadcasting facilities are safe and within the law;

4. Calls on Israel and the Palestinian Authority to make the best possible use of the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Technical Committee, established by the Oslo Accords to address any issues arising in the telecommunications field, with a view to the urgent resolution of any issues concerning broadcasting by these television channels;

5. Welcomes Palestine's institution-building efforts; notes that raids by Israeli forces affecting Palestinian cities where the Palestinian Authority, under the Oslo Accords, has assumed powers and responsibilities over internal security and public order constitute a breach of those accords;

6. Stresses once more that peaceful and non-violent means are the only way to achieve a sustainable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;

7. Calls on the Vice President/High Representative, the Council, and the Commission to place this issue, which concerns the basic rights of public access to information, press freedom and freedom of expression, on the agenda of the EU-Israel Association Council, and reiterates in this context the EU's obligation to ensure consistency between the different areas of its external action and between those and its other policies, pursuant to Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union;

8. Urges the EU and the Member States to affirm a strong and united position and to play a more active role, also within the Quartet, in the efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians; stresses the central role of the Quartet, and fully supports the High Representative in her efforts to ensure that the Quartet establishes a credible perspective for the relaunching of the peace process;

9. 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 President of the UN General Assembly, the Governments and Parliaments of the members of the UN Security Council, the Middle East Quartet Envoy, the Knesset and the Government of Israel, the President of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian Legislative Council.