

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0819/09
by Paul van Buitenen (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Alleged Israeli attack on UNRWA school during Operation Cast Lead

On 6 January, the Israelis faced international condemnation for the alleged attack on the UNRWA-run Ibn Rushd Preparatory School for Boys, killing dozens of refugees in hiding.

According to the article 'Account of Israeli attack doesn't hold up to scrutiny', as appeared in the Canadian newspaper the Globe and Mail on 29 January, the narrative that Israel attacked the school is simply untrue and the people who were killed were on the street instead of in the school hiding.

According to the article 'Brussels condemns Israel bombing of UN school', as appeared on the EUobserver.com website on 7 January, Christina Gallach, spokesperson of the EU High Representative Solana, was quoted stating the following:

'We think the attack is completely unacceptable and strongly condemn the fact that civilians were hit while sheltering themselves from the violence'.

In the same article John Ging, UNRWA's operations director in Gaza, was also quoted: 'We have provided the GPS co-ordinates of every single one of our locations' and 'They are clearly marked with UN insignia, flags flying, lights shining on the flags at night. It's very clear that these are United Nations installations', thereby implying that Israel consciously attacked the UNRWA school.

John Ging, in the article of the Globe and Mail, admits that Israel didn't attack the school but blames the confusion on the Israelis.

Considering the fact that the EU is UNRWA's single largest donor and that it wrongly condemned Israel of attacking the UNRWA school:

- Is the EU prepared to apologise to Israel for wrongly condemning it without checking the facts on the ground?
- Is the EU prepared to investigate how it was possible that Mr Ging apparently spread misleading information concerning the supposed attack on this UNRWA school and whether this was politically motivated?