

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1097/09
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to the Commission

Subject: Costs arising from the Israeli aggression

Between 27 December 2008 and 18 January 2009 Israel pursued an intensive attack on the Gaza Strip. According to a WHO (World Health Organisation) report of 29 January 2009, 1 366 Palestinians were killed and 5 380 were injured. The victims included a great many civilians, with 410 of the dead and 1 855 of the casualties children, and 111 of the dead and 800 of the casualties women.

The economic losses suffered as a result of material damage cannot be equated to the loss of human life. However, here too, the (still provisional) figures are astonishingly high. In the past the European Union was already the greatest donor of financial aid for addressing the humanitarian situation in Gaza. In the Commission's budget proposal for 2008 EUR 158 million and EUR 115 million were provided for CA and PA respectively. Finally EUR 300 million and EUR 200 million respectively were approved in December 2007. During 2008 another EUR 80 million and EUR 230 million were entered because of the deteriorating situation in the Gaza Strip. This means that ultimately in 2008 EUR 430 million in aid was paid to the Palestinians.

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, total losses in terms of buildings, infrastructure and the national economy in the Gaza Strip amount to about EUR 1.46 billion. A final calculation of the damage by the UN and the Commission will be available only in March. On 9 January 2009, the Commission promised EUR 3 million in emergency aid to Gaza. On 26 January 2009 it was announced that another EUR 58 million would be allocated to the Palestinian territories to help the most vulnerable people.

However, under international law the occupying power must provide for the essential needs of the population in the occupied territories.

1. Can the Commission confirm the figures quoted? Has more aid been granted to the Palestinian territories in addition to this?
2. How much aid have the European institutions granted to the Palestinian territories since the second intifada?
3. Will the Commission recover from the State of Israel humanitarian emergency aid that has already been paid for?
4. Will the EU support the Palestinian authorities in exacting reparations from the State of Israel for the rebuilding of houses and economic infrastructure in the Gaza Strip?
5. Will the Commission itself take action against the State of Israel to make it responsible for the costs?
6. Is the EU also involved in the peace process in a way that does justice to its financial assistance to the region?