Parliamentary Assembly
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Resolution 2142 (2017)[1]

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly is extremely concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza and the lack of significant steps by the international community and all parties involved to put an end to the hardship of the people living in this territory.

2. Since the 2014 Israeli military operation in Gaza, the situation has worsened significantly: over 2 200 people (including 551 children) have died, of whom most were civilians; more than 11 000 people have been injured; over 12 620 houses have been totally destroyed and 6 455 severely damaged; and 28% of the population of Gaza has been displaced.

3. The nine-year blockade of Gaza by both Israel and Egypt has subjected its population to collective punishment in contravention of international human rights and humanitarian law. Some 75 000 people are still displaced and 43% of Gaza's population is unemployed, a figure which rises to 60% among young people. In all, 80% of the population relies on humanitarian assistance. The territory of Gaza is suffering from an insufficient power supply and a lack of drinking water. According to a recent report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Gaza is in danger of becoming unlivable by 2020 as a result of severe damage to the coastal aquifer and overall environmental degradation.

4. The humanitarian crisis is also characterised by the precarious situation of the public health and education systems. The destruction of hospitals and lack of drugs and medical equipment have led to a significant increase in chronic diseases and cases of cancer, and an urgent need for more surgeries. Many schools have been destroyed or damaged and others are being used as emergency shelters for displaced persons.

5. The Assembly recalls its Resolution 1940 (2013) on the situation in the Middle East and reiterates its unvarying position that only a negotiated, two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the cessation of the construction of new settlements, or the extension of old ones, on Palestinian territory can create the necessary framework for the normalisation of the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the promotion of Palestinian State-building. It encourages the Government of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority to start negotiations towards a mutual and full commitment to this solution.

6. The Assembly considers that respect for the ceasefire should be the main precondition for the normalisation of the lives of the people in Gaza. To this end, it is important to upgrade security co-operation between the Palestinian authorities and Israel in line with the relevant articles of the Agreement on Movement and Access of November 2005.

7. Significant progress in the reconstruction of property in Gaza and the delivery of basic services for its economic development can only be possible under a united Palestinian Authority, able to ensure security and democratic governance in the Palestinian territories.

1. *Assembly debate* on 24 January 2017 (4th Sitting) (see Doc. 14224, report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Ms Eva-Lena Jansson; and Doc.14239, opinion of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Lord Donald Anderson). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 24 January 2017 (4th Sitting).

8. The Assembly considers that a rapid solution to the Gaza humanitarian crisis is essential to ensuring stability in the Middle East. The lifting of the blockade by Israel and Egypt is a vital precondition for the resolution of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and should be facilitated by the international community through the creation of security conditions necessary for the free movement of people and goods. With this aim, a new international conference on the reconstruction of Gaza should be called.

9. The Assembly considers that its member States, Israel and the Palestinian authorities should mobilise all their efforts to alleviate the humanitarian plight of the population of the Gaza Strip and therefore calls on:

9.1. the international community to:

9.1.1. ensure access to and provision of medical and social services for the population of Gaza;

9.1.2. provide a sustainable solution concerning water and energy supplies to Gaza;

9.1.3. speed up the construction of new schools to keep pace with population growth;

9.1.4. allocate the required funding to the continuation of reconstruction projects in order to provide adequate housing for displaced persons in Gaza;

9.1.5. involve women from Israeli and Palestinian society in the peace negotiations, as is mentioned in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security;

9.1.6. provide special protection for women, children and disabled people in Gaza;

9.1.7. give even greater priority to humanitarian advocacy, including the collection of data on all incidents relating to violations of humanitarian law;

9.1.8. urge both Israeli and Palestinian authorities to re-examine school textbooks in the spirit of the study initiated by the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, and published on 4 February 2013, with the aim of improving objectivity and eliminating material which selectively reinforces each community's national narrative;

9.2. the Israeli authorities to:

9.2.1. lift the blockade of the Gaza Strip to ensure that the population has access to basic and inalienable human rights;

9.2.2. prepare for the removal of the blockade by upgrading the crossing point between Israel and Gaza at Kerem Shalom, and developing further crossing points at Erez and Karni;

9.2.3. assist in facilitating Gaza's exports to Israel, the West Bank and beyond, particularly of agricultural products and textiles, and enable Palestinian workers to seek employment in Israel;

9.2.4. refrain from blocking or suspending the transfer of taxes due, or overdue, to the Palestinian Authority;

9.2.5. increase the supply of fresh water to Gaza until desalination plants can be constructed;

9.2.6. reconsider the list of restricted materials for import to Gaza with the aim of increasing the imported quantities of authorised construction materials, computer equipment, vehicles and chemicals for agriculture and the provision of water, along with adequate monitoring to ensure that all relevant materials are used solely for the purpose intended;

9.2.7. expand the fishing zone to 20 nautical miles, as provided for under the Oslo Accords;

9.2.8. refrain from the use of force without justification against Palestinian civilians in the buffer and fishing zones;

9.2.9. co-operate with the relevant Assembly rapporteurs by granting them access to the territory of Gaza;

9.3. the Palestinian authorities to:

9.3.1. reject and condemn acts of terrorism against Israel;

9.3.2. work to the best of their abilities to prevent the firing of rockets and construction of tunnels into Israel;

9.3.3. form an effective and cohesive government, bridging the two territories;

9.3.4. prepare a multi-annual action plan for Palestinian State-building;

9.3.5. combat all forms of discrimination against women and gender-based violence;

9.3.6. use all means to promote women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, including education on the risks of early marriage and the encouragement of child spacing;

9.3.7. promote women's social and economic empowerment;

9.3.8. sign and respect an agreement with Israel concerning the water supply in Gaza.

10. The Assembly urges the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to fully co-operate with the International Criminal Court's preliminary examination of the situation in Gaza, which started on 16 January 2015. It also urges its member States to support a possible future official examination by the International Criminal Court, if the preliminary findings show that there are reasonable grounds for doing so.

11. The Assembly also calls on its member States to provide the necessary resources to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for their emergency assistance projects in Gaza.

12. The Assembly considers that it is vitally important to facilitate the work of international and national non-governmental organisations which are providing humanitarian assistance to Gaza and to improve the co-ordination of their activities. The work of human rights organisations should also be facilitated.