Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2623 (2025)[1]

Urgent call to put an end to the devastating humanitarian catastrophe and the killing of journalists in Gaza

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Two years on from the appalling terrorist attack and hostage taking perpetrated by Hamas against Israel on 7 October 2023, which the Parliamentary Assembly has from the outset unequivocally condemned, Israel's military operations in Gaza continue without respite. These protracted military operations have inflicted an unbearable toll on civilians, devastated Gaza and its infrastructure for decades to come and spread instability across the wider region.

2. Over this period, efforts to find a way out of the current crisis in Gaza have not succeeded, and the devastation of the territory and human suffering of the civilian population are giving rise to increasing dismay and condemnation internationally, including in Europe. A growing number of States, including several Council of Europe member and observer States, have recognised the State of Palestine in 2025, reflecting a deepening international consensus that a return to a credible political perspective is essential to finding a long-lasting peace. The Assembly recognises the responsibility both of Hamas in igniting the current crisis and in continuing to hold the hostages and of the Israeli Government for its disproportionate response to the attacks of 7 October 2023, which has taken tens of thousands of civilian lives and reduced much of the Gaza Strip to rubble.

3. The Assembly notes the renewed efforts led by the United States of America to find a negotiated solution and expresses hope for an end to the conflict.

4. The Assembly recalls its previous resolutions on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, in particular Resolution 2582 (2025) "The absolute and urgent need to end the humanitarian crisis for women, children and the hostages in Gaza", which have sought a permanent and unconditional ceasefire, the return of the hostages and a renewed effort to achieve a political solution in Gaza.

5. Supporting all efforts to identify a peaceful end to the current crisis and a long-lasting reconciliation process and political agreement between the Israeli and Palestinian leaders and peoples, the Assembly once more calls for an urgent end to the severe humanitarian crisis, which worsens day by day, and pays particular attention to the protection of journalists in Gaza, so that they can carry out their work of reporting to the world, in safety, on the situation on the ground.

6. The military response of Israel to the 7 October 2023 attacks has killed more than 65 000 Palestinians, including over 17 000 children. Entire neighbourhoods have been levelled, with housing, schools, hospitals and cultural sites reduced to rubble. The hardship of multiple displacements of the population to overcrowded shelters or makeshift camps has been compounded by Israel's blocking of aid and food, leading to the formal recognition of famine in areas of Gaza by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Famine Review Committee in August 2025. The Assembly underlines that the deliberate targeting of civilians and the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure cannot be justified under the pretext of self-defence and represent grave violations of international humanitarian law.

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1. *Assembly debate* on 2 October 2025 (34th sitting) (see Doc. 16273, report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Lord Michael German). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 2 October 2025 (34th sitting).

7. It is especially painful that the Palestinian children of Gaza have lost their families, homes and access to education and have been endangered and traumatised to an extent that will affect their whole lives, wherever they live.

8. On 16 September 2025, the United Nations Human Rights Council Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel concluded that the State of Israel had committed and was continuing to commit genocide. The Assembly emphasises the essential role of international judicial institutions in addressing these grave allegations and that accountability for violations of international humanitarian law is essential for any sustainable peace. It also highlights in this respect the obligation of all States parties to prevent genocide pursuant to Article I of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

9. The Assembly deplores the use of violent and dehumanising language by Israeli officials, including members of Prime Minister Netanyahu's government. Several Council of Europe member States have imposed sanctions on Israeli Government ministers for repeated incitement against Palestinian civilians. Such rhetoric contributes to a climate conducive to serious human rights abuses against the Palestinian civilian population.

10. The expansion of military operations targeting Gaza City, beginning in August 2025, has intensified the already intolerable human suffering and humanitarian catastrophe. These operations have resulted in further mass displacement, a new acceleration in the widespread destruction of homes and infrastructure and the further loss of civilian life in a situation where the population was already facing extreme deprivation.

11. The formal confirmation of famine in Gaza City and surrounding areas by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Famine Review Committee in August 2025 has demonstrated that Israel has not responded to repeated calls to allow unhindered food, medical supplies, fuel and other essential aid into Gaza to reach those in need. Aid delivery models approved by Israel's Security Cabinet have violated core humanitarian principles and have exposed civilians and aid workers to significant harm, often resulting in deaths, including of children seeking food and water for their families. The Assembly stresses that the deliberate obstruction of humanitarian relief constitutes a grave breach of international humanitarian law.

12. The Assembly welcomes efforts by member States of the Council of Europe to increase the flow of aid into Gaza and the commitment taken, on 23 September 2025, by the governments of 24 member States to provide support needed for the treatment of patients from Gaza.

13. The Assembly underlines that transparency and accountability in situations of armed conflict depend on the ability of independent journalists to operate safely. Journalists are our eyes and ears on the ground, bearing witness to political and military developments, and most importantly humanitarian catastrophes and crises. Journalists' exposure to life-threatening circumstances, or even death, deprives us of access to information. Since October 2023, more than 200 journalists, mostly Palestinian, have been killed and dozens detained. Although Israel denies deliberately targeting journalists and insists it only strikes military objectives, it has alleged that the majority of journalists killed were in fact terrorists and has also alleged a collaboration between al-Jazeera and Hamas. This claim has been rejected by al-Jazeera and international press associations. At the same time, Hamas itself has been accused by the Committee to Protect Journalists of under-reported repression, including intimidation, detentions and violence towards critics. Despite immense risks and amid the destroyed media infrastructure and the severe humanitarian crisis, local journalists, often young and non-professional and thus lacking any resources or security protection, continue to document daily life.

14. Foreign journalists remain largely barred from Gaza and those allowed entry are controlled by the Israel Defense Forces, limiting independent coverage. In addition to hundreds of media outlets, international organisations such as Reporters Without Borders, the Committee to Protect Journalists and the European Federation of Journalists have issued urgent appeals for free access and the protection of journalists. They have also demanded investigations into alleged war crimes such as systematic starvation.

15. The Assembly deplores the exceptionally high number of journalists killed or injured in Gaza and reiterates that journalists and media workers are civilians under international humanitarian law. It calls on all parties to ensure their protection and the safe, unhindered access of all journalists to conflict areas so that the realities of the war can be accurately and independently reported.

16. The Assembly is following the progress of the Global Sumud Flotilla towards Gaza. This civilian and non-violent initiative comprises about 50 vessels and several hundred volunteers, including many citizens of Council of Europe member States. Its purpose is to deliver humanitarian aid and to draw attention to the long-standing Israeli blockade of Gaza. Members of the Israeli Government have made threats concerning this

flotilla, based on unsubstantiated allegations that it constitutes an initiative by Hamas. The Assembly notes with grave concern unprecedented reports of drone strikes in Tunisian waters on 8 and 9 September 2025, and again on 23 and 24 September 2025 off the Greek coast. In response to these incidents, Italy and Spain have deployed naval escorts to accompany the flotilla.

17. The Assembly is convinced that only a return to a situation in which the principles of humanitarian law are fully respected and seen to be respected, and in which journalists are allowed to carry out their work of information gathering and reporting in safety and independence, will create the necessary conditions for a resolution of the current crisis and a secure and peaceful future for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. It calls upon the parties to the conflict, and to all the international community, to put an end to the man-made humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza with no more delay.

18. With regard to the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, the Assembly:

18.1. demands the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held in Gaza;

18.2. calls for an immediate, permanent and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza to halt the appalling loss of civilian life, prevent further displacement and create space for political dialogue;

18.3. insists that all parties comply strictly with international humanitarian law, ensuring full protection of civilians, medical facilities and humanitarian workers;

18.4. calls for the immediate and unhindered entry and distribution of humanitarian aid, including food, water, medicine, fuel and shelter.

19. As regards the role of Council of Europe member and observer States, the Assembly calls on them to:

19.1. take resolute and immediate measures to help ensure the return of the remaining hostages and put an end to the conflict in Gaza, and provide the necessary humanitarian and other assistance to the people of Gaza;

19.2. respect and uphold their obligations under international law, including by supporting the work of United Nations organs and agencies and the work of the International Court of Justice, and by ensuring respect for the rules laid down in the Geneva Conventions in all circumstances;

19.3. facilitate medical evacuations, including the provision of both treatment and transport, with particular attention to children and their families, as well as pregnant women and their families;

19.4. devise and put in place special rehabilitation programmes for Palestinian children.

20. As regards journalists, the Assembly urges Israel to immediately take the following measures:

20.1. allow safe and unhindered access to Gaza and other conflict areas for accredited journalists and media workers;

20.2. stop targeting journalists and their families, in addition to civilians;

20.3. carry out full and independent investigations into the deaths of journalists in Gaza, make public the conclusions and take any steps necessary to hold those responsible to account.

21. The Assembly calls on Council of Europe member States to:

21.1. continue to exert pressure to grant immediate free and safe access for accredited international journalists and media workers to Gaza so that the situation on the ground can be observed and reported;

21.2. call for and facilitate the evacuation of Palestinian journalists and their families from Gaza, and provide them with psychological and material support, where necessary, for their immediate protection.

22. The Assembly urges the International Criminal Court to investigate the alleged war crimes committed by the Israeli army against journalists in Gaza.

23. With regard to the Global Sumud Flotilla, the Assembly:

23.1. condemns all reported attacks and acts of harassment against it and reiterates the obligation of all States to respect international law, in particular the law of the sea, including the duty to conduct search-and-rescue operations whenever vessels within their designated zones are in distress;

23.2. calls on member States of the Council of Europe to engage in diplomatic efforts with Israel to guarantee the safe delivery of humanitarian aid by the flotilla.