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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Borrell i Fontelles
on behalf of the European Commission
(14.11.2024)

The EU has repeatedly called¹ on Israel to fully comply with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, in all circumstances. As such, any actions by Israel must ensure the protection of the civilians and their access to the humanitarian aid². In its conclusions of 17 October 2024³, the European Council reaffirmed its call for an immediate ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages, the urgent improvement of access and sustained distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale throughout Gaza, and an enduring end to hostilities, in line with United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 2735.

The EU deplores the unacceptable number of civilian casualties, especially women and children, in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as the catastrophic levels of hunger and imminent risk of famine caused by the insufficient entry of aid into Gaza. It also recalls the need to fully implement the provisional measures orders rendered by the International Court of Justice on 26 January 2024, 28 March 2024 and 24 May 2024⁴. Israel has a legal obligation to ensure that humanitarian organisations have safe access to those in need, as recalled by the UN Security Council resolutions. The UN agencies, and in particular The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), are essential for the humanitarian response in Gaza. The EU will continue to support them. The EU expresses its grave concern over the legislation adopted by the Israeli Knesset forbidding contact between Israeli state entities and UNRWA, that will have far-reaching consequences.

¹ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-new-york/eu-statement-%E2%80%93-un-general-assembly-1st-committee-regional-disarmament-and-security-1_en?s=63;
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/2pebccz2/20241017-euco-conclusions-en.pdf>;
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/09/26/statement-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-eu-on-the-military-escalation-between-israel-and-hezbollah/>

² Geneva Convention (IV), Geneva, 12 August 1949.

³ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/10/17/european-council-conclusions-17-october-2024/>

⁴ <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf>; <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240328-ord-01-00-en.pdf>; <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240524-ord-01-00-en.pdf>