

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000431/25
to the Council
João Oliveira (The Left)
(30 January 2025)

Subject: Guaranteeing the continuation of UNRWA's work in Palestinian territories illegally occupied by Israel

Representatives of the State of Israel have said that laws passed by the Israeli Parliament banning the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in illegally occupied Palestinian territory will enter into force on 30 January 2025.

This indefensible decision poses a threat to the humanitarian aid UNRWA provides to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians.

The UNRWA Commissioner-General has said that the Israeli legislation will only deepen the Palestinian people's suffering, especially in the Gaza Strip, where people are in a living hell and an entire generation of children is at risk.

The UN Secretary-General views the implementation of the laws, which could have devastating consequences for Palestinian refugees, to be unacceptable.

In view of the above:

1. What steps does the Council intend to take in the near future, including with regard to the State of Israel, to ensure UNRWA's work can continue in the illegally occupied Palestinian territories?
2. Does the Council intend to suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement?
3. What steps does the Council intend to take to ensure Palestinians have access to humanitarian aid?

Submitted: 30.1.2025

Reply
(7 July 2025)

While the full extent of the consequences of the Israeli legislation adopted on 28 October 2024 on UNRWA's capacity to fulfil its mandate in the occupied Palestinian territory is not yet clear, the EU has recalled ⁽¹⁾, ⁽²⁾ its deep concern in this regard, has repeatedly stressed ⁽³⁾, ⁽⁴⁾, ⁽⁵⁾ the essential role of UNRWA, which provides crucial support to the civilian population in both Gaza and the wider region, and has condemned any attempt to obstruct it. Continued implementation of the UNRWA Action Plan is key ⁽⁶⁾, ⁽⁷⁾, ⁽⁸⁾.

The EU has deplored the breakdown of the ceasefire in Gaza, which has caused a large number of civilian casualties in recent air strikes. It has called for an immediate return to the full implementation of the ceasefire-hostage release agreement, and stressed the importance of unimpeded access and sustained distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale into and throughout Gaza ⁽⁹⁾.

Since 7 October 2023, the EU and its Member States working as Team Europe have acted quickly to mobilise over EUR 1.16 billion in humanitarian assistance, which has been channelled through humanitarian partners on the ground (international and local humanitarian organisations).

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/viyhc2m4/20250320-european-council-conclusions-en.pdf>

⁽²⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/jhlenhaj/euco-conclusions-19122024-en.pdf>

⁽³⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/jhlenhaj/euco-conclusions-19122024-en.pdf>

⁽⁴⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/2pebccz2/20241017-euco-conclusions-en.pdf>

⁽⁵⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/qa3lblga/euco-conclusions-27062024-en.pdf>

⁽⁶⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/jhlenhaj/euco-conclusions-19122024-en.pdf>

⁽⁷⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/2pebccz2/20241017-euco-conclusions-en.pdf>

⁽⁸⁾ https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/ist_012025_progressreport_01202025.pdf

⁽⁹⁾ https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/03/20/european-council-conclusions-on-middle-east-oceans-and-multilateralism/?utm_source=brevo&utm_campaign=AUTOMATED%20-%20Alert%20-%20Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_id=3318

In addition, the EU has been providing in-kind assistance by land, air and sea. As of 5 February 2025, over 4 000 metric tonnes of humanitarian cargo were supplied by humanitarian partners, EU-owned stockpile items, and donations from Member States ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Concerning the EU-Israel Association Agreement, the Council recalls its reply to Written Question E-001357/2024. The European Union and Israel held the thirteenth meeting of their Association Council on 24 February 2025 in Brussels.

The parties engaged in a political dialogue, focusing on the conflict in Gaza and Israeli-Palestinian relations, regional issues including Iran, and global issues.

The discussion also covered EU-Israel bilateral relations. The European Union presented its position ⁽¹¹⁾, including that, pursuant to Article 2 of the Association Agreement, relations between the Parties, as well as all the provisions of the Agreement itself, are to be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles, which guide their internal and international policy and are an essential element of the Association Agreement.

As for further engagement with the parties concerned, it may also be noted that the first ever High-level Dialogue meeting between the European Union and the Palestinian Authority took place on 14 April 2025.

The European Commission announced its proposal for a multiannual Comprehensive Support Programme worth up to EUR 1.6 billion, to foster Palestinian recovery and resilience.

⁽¹⁰⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-humanitarian-support-to-palestinians/>

⁽¹¹⁾ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6511-2025-INIT/en/pdf>