

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002153/25

to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Marc Botenga (The Left), Ana Miranda Paz (Verts/ALE), Rima Hassan (The Left), Cecilia Strada (S&D), Özlem Demirel (The Left), Manon Aubry (The Left), Vicent Marzà Ibáñez (Verts/ALE), Aodhán Ó Riordáin (S&D), Michael McNamara (Renew), Maria Walsh (PPE), Dario Tamburrano (The Left), Carola Rackete (The Left), João Oliveira (The Left), Mounir Satouri (Verts/ALE), Mélissa Camara (Verts/ALE), Anthony Smith (The Left), Saskia Bricmont (Verts/ALE), Catarina Martins (The Left), Danilo Della Valle (The Left), Rudi Kennes (The Left), Oihane Agirregoitia Martínez (Renew), Giorgos Georgiou (The Left), Majdouline Sbai (Verts/ALE), Matjaž Nemec (S&D), Konstantinos Arvanitis (The Left), Per Clausen (The Left), Damien Carême (The Left), Leila Chaibi (The Left)
(28 May 2025)

Subject: Gaza: offer of EU assistance in sidelining UN humanitarian agencies and consultation with Palestinian counterparts

On 7 May 2025, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) referred to her conversation about Gaza with Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Gideon Sa'ar by stating: 'I offered also help by the European Union to distribute the humanitarian aid if they don't trust the other actors there ⁽¹⁾'. The 'other actors' referred to include UN agencies, such as OCHA (the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) and UNRWA (the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East), and recognised international humanitarian organisations.

The VP/HR's statement therefore appears to endorse the Israeli Government's attacks on UN agencies and Israel's attempt to weaponise aid, as a UN spokesperson highlighted.

The VP/HR's statement also directly contradicted an almost simultaneous Commission statement saying that the Israeli plan runs counter to humanitarian principles ⁽²⁾.

1. Does the VP/HR support the replacement or sidelining of established international humanitarian actors in the occupied Palestinian territory, including UN agencies?
2. How does the VP/HR's position align with the legal obligation, under international humanitarian law, to uphold and support the role of neutral humanitarian organisations?
3. Did the VP/HR consult the Palestinian Authority or Palestinian representatives before making this offer to the Israeli Government? If not, how does the offer respect the principle of consultation with local authorities?

Submitted: 28.5.2025

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(15 July 2025)

The dire humanitarian situation in Gaza is a priority for the EU. The EU has consistently called on the Israeli government to lift the blockade on the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza ⁽¹⁾.

The EU reiterates that humanitarian aid must never be politicised or militarised and stressed the role of the United Nations (UN) in distributing humanitarian assistance ⁽²⁾.

The EU continues to voice its urgent call for the immediate, unimpeded and sustained resumption of delivery of aid at scale, fully in line with humanitarian principles and according to the needs of the civilian population in Gaza, as expressed in a joint statement by the High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) with the Commissioner for the Mediterranean and the Commissioner for Equality on 7 May 2025 ⁽³⁾ and in a joint donor statement on humanitarian aid to Gaza on 19 May 2025 ⁽⁴⁾.

A diplomatic solution is the only way forward. The EU continues to support the efforts by the mediators to reach a permanent ceasefire and hostage-release deal. The HR/VP is engaging in diplomatic efforts with all relevant actors, including the UN and regional partners, to help end the conflict in Gaza.

Since the onset of the conflict in Gaza, the EU has deployed all available humanitarian instruments to ease the suffering of the civilian population in Gaza and the West Bank.

¹ <https://www.thejournal.ie/ireland-joins-spain-and-four-other-nations-to-warn-of-dangerous-new-escalation-by-israel-6697781-May2025/>.

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_25_1155.

⁽¹⁾ https://north-africa-middle-east-gulf.ec.europa.eu/news/joint-statement-high-representative-kallas-and-commissioners-suica-and-lahbib-humanitarian-situation-2025-04-12_en; https://north-africa-middle-east-gulf.ec.europa.eu/news/joint-statement-high-representative-kallas-commissioner-suica-and-commissioner-lahbib-humanitarian-2025-05-07_en; https://north-africa-middle-east-gulf.ec.europa.eu/news/read-out-phone-call-between-president-von-der-leyen-and-his-majesty-king-abdullah-ii-jordan-2025-05-27_en.

⁽²⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israel-palestine-statement-high-representative-occupied-palestinian-territory_en.

⁽³⁾ https://north-africa-middle-east-gulf.ec.europa.eu/news/joint-statement-high-representative-kallas-commissioner-suica-and-commissioner-lahbib-humanitarian-2025-05-07_en.

⁽⁴⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/joint-donor-statement-humanitarian-aid-gaza%C2%A0_en.

The EU announced initial humanitarian funding of EUR 120 million for Gaza in 2025, and then allocated an additional EUR 50 million to address the urgent needs.

This brings total EU humanitarian assistance since October 2023 to over EUR 500 million (EUR 103 million in 2023 and EUR 237 million in 2024).
