(English version)

Question for written answer E-002160/26
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Maria Zacharia (NI)
(27 May 2026)

Subject: Alleged ill-treatment of EU citizens detained following Global Sumud Flotilla interception

After Israeli forces intercepted the Global Sumud Flotilla in international waters, the release and repatriation of the detained participants — numbering around 430 and including citizens of EU Member States, among them 19 Greeks — has finally been completed.

According to public statements by the mission's organisers, as well as international publications (Reuters), a number of those released have been hospitalised with injuries, and at least 15 people have reported sexual assault, including rape, as well as beatings leading to fractures and being shot with rubber bullets at close range. The Israeli authorities deny the allegations.

These are extremely serious accusations which, if confirmed, constitute torture and sexual violence within the meaning of international law and call for an immediate, independent and effective investigation.

Can the the Vice-President/High Representative answer the following:

1. Has the EEAS gathered information on the conditions of detention and the treatment of the EU citizens who were participating in the flotilla?

2. What steps will the Vice-President/High Representative take to ensure that these allegations of ill-treatment and sexual violence are subject to an independent, impartial and effective investigation, in accordance with international standards?

3. Does the the Vice-President/High Representative consider that, if substantiated, these incidents raise an issue of compliance with Article 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement?

Submitted: 27.5.2026

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(31 July 2026)

The EU followed the situation of the Global Sumud Flotilla closely, including through its Delegation to the State of Israel that was in touch with human rights organisations representing the flotilla participants.

Following the interception of the Global Sumud Flotilla in international waters and the detention of flotilla participants, the High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) reached out to Israel's Foreign Minister urging to ensure their safety and dignity in detention. The EU Member States bear responsibility for consular protection and the security of their citizens at sea.

In line with the Consular Protection Directive ([1]), the EU Delegation has facilitated coordination of EU efforts on the ground for this consular crisis response.

Since 7 October 2023, the EU has provided over EUR 674 million in humanitarian assistance for Palestine. The EU understands the goal of the flotilla's participants to deliver much-needed aid to people in desperate need.

However, the EU discourages such initiatives due to the risks to participants' safety and potential for escalation, and because the best way to deliver humanitarian assistance to Gaza is through established channels.

The HR/VP has engaged repeatedly with Israeli counterparts to convey the EU's positions. The EU will also continue to support efforts towards independent investigations into violations human rights and of international humanitarian law, including through UN human rights mechanisms.

In September 2025, the Commission proposed a partial suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement ([2]) on certain trade matters, following a review of Israel's compliance with Article 2 of the Agreement conducted by HR/VP with the support of a majority of Member States. The conclusion of the review was that there are indications that Israel would be in breach of its obligations.

([1]) https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/democracy-eu-citizenship-anti-corruption/consular-protection_en.
([2]) https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/israel/documents/eu_israel/asso_agree_en.pdf.