

European Commission and Council

High Representative Borrell

“We have said in our Communication: condemnation of terrorist attack, condemnation of any attack against civilians; release of hostages; protection of civilians; respect of international humanitarian law - and it means no blockage of water, food, or electricity to the civil population in Gaza - to open humanitarian corridors; to facilitate people who have to escape the bombing from Gaza. [...]

Israel has the right to defend [itself], but it has to be done according to the right of international law, humanitarian law. Some decisions are against this international law. [...]

All in all, this barbaric and terrorist attack, that has caused so many casualties, so many people being killed, that has provoked a reaction from the Israeli Defence Forces, that will also cause human suffering – we insist that this has to be done according to humanitarian law [...].

As I said, some of their actions, and the United Nations have already said that, like cutting water, cutting electricity and food to a mass of civilian people, is against international law. So yes, there are some actions that are not in accordance with international law. That is a critical moment in which the reaction to the barbaric attack perpetrated by Hamas provokes a situation, in which we have to remember that the right to defence, has to be done within the international law. Everybody has to abide to international humanitarian law, and the United Nations and myself, we have pointed out that in some cases, this is not the case.”
([Remarks at informal meeting EU FA Ministers, 10.10.2023](#))

“I welcome the clear condemnation of attacks against any civilian by the League of Arab States @arableague_gs, including the Palestinian Authority, emphasising the obligation of all parties to protect them. Unequivocal commitment to IHL is key.” ([X, 12.10.2023](#))

“I fully endorse @antonioguterres warning that Israel’s request that 1 million civilians evacuate from the North of Gaza across a densely populated warzone to a place with no food, water, or shelter into a territory under siege is extremely dangerous and virtually impossible.” ([X, 14.10.2023](#))

“I think we can all agree that the right to defend oneself, as with all rights, has its limits. And, in this case, the limits are those set by international law and, in particular, international humanitarian law. All this is obvious and we can say it again, but repeating it will not help us move forward to make that necessary reflection, which will guide our actions.

Yes, we condemn those terrible terrorist attacks, but we must also condemn the civilian deaths – the civilian victims – in Gaza, which now stand at 3 000. [...]

[...] We ask all sides to respect international and humanitarian law. And that these attacks against defenceless civilians, wherever they are, must stop. [...]

I recommend that you read the Practical Guide to Humanitarian Law, which clearly states that depriving a group of human beings under siege of basic water supplies is contrary to international law, whether it is in Ukraine or in Gaza.” ([Speech in EP Plenary, 18.10.2023](#))

Commissioner Lenarčič for Crisis Management

“Israel has the right to defend itself and protect its people from Hamas’s terror.

This right must be exercised in compliance with #IHL. Civilians must be protected.

Critical infrastructure must not be targeted.

Safe and unrestricted access for humanitarian aid must be ensured.” ([X, 13.10.2023](#))

Retweeted statement by UN Country Team in Palestine:

"The #UNinPalestine calls on the Israeli Government to rescind its announcement for UN agencies and Gazans to 'relocate to southern #Gaza immediately' without any guarantee for their safety or their return" ([X, 13.10.2023](#))

"The catastrophic humanitarian situation in #Gaza is about to reach breaking point. Desperately needed fuel, water, food and medicine must reach people trapped in Gaza immediately. The Rafah border crossing must be opened without further delay! [...] Once the supplies reach Gaza, it is imperative that relief workers are able to do their work, which is to deliver assistance to those in need and save lives. [...] The safety of humanitarian staff to bring these supplies to people in need without any impediments must be ensured."

([X, 16.10.2023](#))

"I'm joining the urgent call by @UNReliefChief & @UNLazzarini for immediate humanitarian suspension of hostilities in Gaza to prevent a human catastrophe. Humanitarian organisations on the ground are reaching their limits. They can only provide help with access granted & secured." ([X, 17.10.2023](#))

European Council

"Universal values and human dignity. Always and everywhere.

This is the core of the EU.

International law and international humanitarian law must be respected.

Basic supplies must reach the most vulnerable." ([Council President Michel on X, 12.10.2023](#))

"Targeting of civilian infrastructure is not in line with international law.

It's imperative that all the facts surrounding this incident are thoroughly investigated, and those responsible are held accountable.

We also urge for immediate access to humanitarian aid in the Gaza strip to provide assistance."

([Council President Michel on X, 18.10.2023](#))

"Israel has the right to defend itself, in line with international law. International law must be respected. In Ukraine. In Middle East. Everywhere. Peace & rules based order are our beacon."

([Council President Michel on X, 19.10.2023](#))

"European Union leaders will call this week for a "humanitarian pause" in the Israel-Hamas war so that aid for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip can safely reach those in need, according to draft conclusions of an EU summit.. The European Council supports the call of UNSG (U.N. Secretary-General Antonio) Guterres for a humanitarian pause in order to allow for safe humanitarian access and aid to reach those in need," the draft conclusions of the summit said." ([Draft Council conclusions as reported by Reuters, 23.10.2023](#))

European leaders and FA Ministers

BE

"The region deserves peace. The suffering of civilians must cease."

([FA Minister Lahbib on X, 10.10.2023](#))

"Even in war there are rules. Collectively targeting the entire population of Gaza is not possible, completely cutting off Gaza from water and energy is not acceptable." ([Prime Minister De Croo, 13.10.2023](#))

"All parties must respect international humanitarian law. Civilians cannot be used as targets or shields."

([FA Minister Lahbib on X, 14.10.2023](#))

"[A]s the Prime Minister said, more is needed. Emergency workers must be able to do their work. Emergency aid must reach the people in Gaza. They need it now and that is a matter of life and death. I therefore strongly reiterate our call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and for respect for international humanitarian law. Bombing hospitals and schools is unacceptable. The warring parties know this and it is high time they act accordingly."

([Development Minister Gennez in Parliament, 19.10.2023](#))

ES

"We cannot confuse Hamas, which is in the list of EU's terrorist groups, with the Palestinian population, or the Palestinian Authority or the United Nation's organisations on the ground."

([FA Minister Albares on AlJazeera, 10.10.2023](#))

"Alarmed by the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Civilians must be protected and the access of aid allowed. International humanitarian law must be respected, including the release of hostages."

([FA Minister Albares on X, 14.10.2023](#))

Hospitals can never be a target. The Palestinian civilian population must be protected and the delivery of humanitarian aid in Gaza must be guaranteed. ([FA Minister Albares on X, 18.10.2023](#))

"I just spoke with @antonioguterres, the Secretary-General of @UN, about the dramatic situation in the Middle East. I conveyed my full support for his calls to respect international and humanitarian law and to protect civilians. Humanitarian aid must enter Gaza immediately."

([Prime Minister Sánchez on X, 19.10.2023](#))

"Now the essential thing is to protect all civilians. To the hostages, who must be immediately returned to their families, and to those who suffer the horror in Gaza.

The only way to achieve this is with more humanitarian aid and a humanitarian ceasefire. And, at the same time, lay the foundations of two States, Israel and Palestine, that mutually respect each other and coexist in peace and security."

([Prime Minister Sánchez at Cairo Peace Summit, 21.10.2023](#))

FI

Retweeted HR Borell:

"I fully endorse @antonioguterres warning that Israel's request that 1 million civilians evacuate from the North of Gaza across a densely populated warzone to a place with no food, water, or shelter into a territory under siege is extremely dangerous and virtually impossible."

([FA Minister Valtonen on X, 14.10.2023](#))

"Alleviating the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza is of utmost importance. International humanitarian law must be respected and the protection of civilians must be guaranteed. The EU must respond to the situation in a strong and united manner."

([FA Minister Valtonen, 20.10.2023](#))

FR

"International humanitarian law is an obligation on everyone and must allow civilians to be protected. Humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip must be opened up without delay." ([MFA statement, 16.10.2023](#))

"Nothing can justify striking a hospital. Nothing can justify targeting civilians."

France condemns the attack on the Al-Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza, which made so many Palestinian victims. Our thoughts are with them. All the light must be shed on the circumstances.”
([President Macron on X, 18.10.2023](#))

“Calls for humanitarian pauses to allow full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for UN humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners, the ICRC and other impartial humanitarian organizations, and encourages the establishment of humanitarian corridors and other initiatives for the delivery of humanitarian aid.”
([Draft UNSC resolution supported by France, vetoed by US, 19.10.2023](#))

“Rafah has just opened. France welcomes this first step. This access must be sustainable to cover all the humanitarian needs of the civilian population in Gaza. We call for a humanitarian truce.”
([MFA statement on X, 21.10.2023](#))

“A first step was taken this morning, which must be followed by others in a lasting manner. The distribution of aid to civilian populations [in Gaza] presupposes a humanitarian truce, which could lead to a ceasefire.”
([FA Minister Colonna on X, 21.10.2023](#))

IE

“These inhumane and senseless attacks have unleashed new horror upon innocent people in Israel and Gaza. [...] This requires us to put protection of civilians at the heart of our objectives and to strive towards an international effort that can deliver a just and sustainable peace.”
([FA Minister Martin, 09.10.2023](#))

“In respect of Israel and Gaza, we’ve been very clear that Israel has a right to self defense, but it must be within international law and that there are obligations under the Geneva Convention. And it simply isn’t feasible, that a million people can move out of the city in 24 hours. [...] There’s an obligation to protect civilians in Gaza, to protect children and families and so forth and people who have nothing to do with Hamas. [...] Our value system is one that does not in any way, support any collective punishment of an entire population. That’s not acceptable, from our perspective.”
([FA Minister Martin, 13.10.2023](#))

“Even wars have rules. International humanitarian law exists for a reason. Its overarching aim is to protect civilians; all civilians, everywhere. The rules are clear and they apply to all parties to all conflicts everywhere; state actor and non-state actors alike.
The decision by the Israeli military to tell the entire civilian population in the north of the Gaza strip to move southward for their own safety is deeply dangerous and impossible to implement. The UN has been very clear: it is not possible for such a move to take place without serious humanitarian consequences and the likelihood of a catastrophic situation. [...] We absolutely must distinguish between Hamas and Palestinian civilians in Gaza. [...] Under international law, Israel has a right to defend itself from attack, but this must be done within the parameters of international humanitarian law.” ([FA Minister Martin, 15.10.2023](#))

“The UN Secretary General made it very clear yesterday; even wars have rules. I have said repeatedly that there should be a humanitarian ceasefire to meet the urgent basic needs of the people in Gaza. It is essential that humanitarian relief is provided to those who need it.”
([FA Minister Martin, 18.10.2023](#))

LU

“In parallel, Minister Asselborn is also calling for de-escalation and a cessation of hostilities. Like Secretary General Guterres, he is deeply distressed by the announcement of a complete siege of the Gaza Strip, with no electricity, fuel, water or food for 2.3 million civilians, which are trapped and helplessly exposed to the current air raids without shelter. [...]

Jean Asselborn appeals to Israel to act in full compliance with international law and to ensure the protection civilians. The civilian population in Gaza is not Hamas and it cannot be held responsible and punished collectively for the horrors committed by the latter. [...]

This also applies to the West Bank, where the increase in settler violence and the forced transfer of Palestinian communities has reached alarming levels. Israel, as the occupying power, is bound by international law to ensure the protection of civilians, even when conducting military operations.”
([MFA statement, 13.10.2023](#))

MT

“Calls for humanitarian pauses to allow full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for UN humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners, the ICRC and other impartial humanitarian organizations, and encourages the establishment of humanitarian corridors and other initiatives for the delivery of humanitarian aid.”

([Draft UNSC resolution supported by Malta, vetoed by US, 19.10.2023](#))

NL

“The Dutch government is concerned about the growing crises in the Gaza Strip. It has emphasised that international humanitarian law must be respected. Humanitarian aid workers and other civilians must never be targets of violence. And access for aid workers and relief supplies must be unimpeded.”
([Dutch government statement, 17.10.2023](#))

“The tragic situation in Gaza calls for humanitarian pauses to allow much-needed aid to get through for the innocent civilians in Gaza. It is good that humanitarian aid is on its way, but much more is needed soon. Gaza needs a sustainable humanitarian corridor for aid and essential goods such as food, water and fuel.”
([Prime Minister Rutte on X, 22.10.2023](#))

NO

“Israel has the right to defend itself against armed attacks. That said, all self defence measures must be necessary and proportionate, as required by international law. The establishment of a full blockade, including on access to electricity, water, food, and other goods that are indispensable for the survival of the civilian population in Gaza, is unacceptable. Israel has an obligation to allow for the entry of humanitarian aid and to ensure access to humanitarian assistance for the civilian population in Gaza.”
([FA Minister Huitfeldt, 12.10.2023](#))

“All self-defence measures must be carried out in line with international humanitarian law. Civilians must be protected. The consequences for civilians of Israel’s attacks on Gaza are totally unacceptable. Norway condemns Israel’s announced full blockade of Gaza.” ([FA Minister Huitfeldt, 13.10.2023](#))

PT

“The news from Gaza is horrific and shocking. Hundreds of innocent people were killed in a hospital. The UNRWA school was also bombed and there were further deaths. These were not military targets. We repeat our urgent appeal for full respect for international humanitarian law.”
([FA Minister Carvinho on X, 17.10.2023](#))

“Useful and interesting exchange between MFA @JoaoCravinho and his counterpart from Kuwait @MOFAKuwait. The Ministers agreed on the **need to protect the people of Gaza, provide humanitarian assistance**, and create a roadmap for a lasting and sustainable peace in the region.”
([MFA statement on X, 19.10.2023](#))

SI

“Slovenia is particularly concerned about the humanitarian situation and the protection of civilians on both sides. The killing of people must be stopped and the release of hostages negotiated. ‘Unfortunately, civilians always pay the highest price in conflicts, and the path to peace must be a top priority,’ stressed [FA] Minister Fajon, adding that ‘Palestinians are not Hamas and should not suffer because of Hamas’ actions.’ [...] Slovenia **calls for compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law**. ‘We must give back hope to the people of the Middle East,’ she stressed in her address.”
([MFA statement, 10.10.2023](#))

“I join the calls made by @JosepBorrellF and @antonioguterres regarding the evacuation of people in Gaza. Relocation is extremely dangerous. All parties must respect international humanitarian law. **Civilians cannot be used as targets or shields. Aid must be allowed into Gaza.**” ([FA Minister Fajon on X, 14.10.2023](#))

Retweeted UNSG Guterres:

“Even wars have rules. International humanitarian law & human rights law must be respected & upheld; civilians must be protected & also never used as shields.
All hostages in Gaza must be released immediately.” ([FA Minister Fajon on X, 14.10.2023](#))

“We are shocked and appalled by the news of hundreds of civilian casualties, including women and children, in #Gaza. Hospitals and schools must never be a target of any attack. SI **calls for respect of international humanitarian law. Civilians must not be targeted, nor used as hostages or shields.**”
([MFA statement on X, 17.10.2023](#))