

Statement by the Conference of Presidents on the Ceasefire in Gaza

- 1. The European Parliament's Conference of Presidents (President and political groups' leaders) welcomes the recent ceasefire in Gaza and the progress it represents for the phased release of hostages. This development is a significant step in reducing the immense suffering endured by civilians on both sides over the past months.**
2. We the leaders of the Political Groups of the European Parliament reiterate our deepest sorrow for the innocent victims on both sides since the horrific Hamas attacks on Israel on 7 October 2023. We commend the dedication of mediators, including the United States, Egypt, and Qatar, whose efforts were instrumental in achieving this breakthrough. It is crucial that all commitments made under this agreement are upheld, ensuring the release of all hostages and a sustainable cessation of violence.
3. All parties must commit fully to their obligations and prioritise the protection of civilians. We urge all European and international actors to closely monitor the implementation of the ceasefire and hold accountable those who fail to comply.
4. The release of the first hostages, including Emily Damari, Doron Steinbrecher, and Romi Gonen, marks an emotional milestone after 15 months of captivity. Their return home brings immense relief to their families, yet many other families continue to endure the agony of waiting or grieving. We echo the call for the immediate release of all remaining hostages and emphasise the importance of providing them with urgent humanitarian assistance while they remain in captivity. We stand with the affected families and reiterates that no effort should be spared in ensuring every last hostage is brought home safely.
5. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza demands immediate and sustained action. We emphasise the importance of unrestricted humanitarian access to ensure that aid reaches those who need it most. All UN agencies active in the region must be fully supported in their efforts to assist displaced individuals and facilitate their safe return home.
6. Since the attacks, the region, including Lebanon, has witnessed widespread violence and devastation, with civilians, particularly women and children, bearing the brunt. We call for an immediate end to all hostilities. We reiterate the fundamental principle that all actions must comply with international humanitarian law. There must be accountability for violations, and justice must be delivered for all victims.
7. We reaffirm the European Parliament's commitment to a negotiated two-state solution, which remains the most viable path to lasting peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians. We call on all parties to renew efforts to remove the obstacles to this solution and to engage in dialogue aimed at achieving mutual understanding and respect.
8. As representatives of the European people, the European Parliament will actively engage in supporting peace efforts through parliamentary diplomacy. Strengthening dialogue with regional actors, fostering cooperation, and ensuring the EU's role as a peace facilitator are essential to building trust and laying the groundwork for lasting peace.
9. Let this ceasefire serve as an opportunity to chart a new course toward a peaceful and equitable future for all people in the region, and may the European Parliament continue to play its part in fostering understanding and reconciliation.