

EU stops short of call for ceasefire; many European nations abstain on UN resolution for humanitarian aid to Gaza

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Screengrab from European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen meeting with Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu; October 13, 2023. Von der Leyen's unreserved statement of support for Israel triggered backlash from several EU leaders | X: @vonderleyen

Brussels, October 28 (RHC)-- European Union leaders have called for a "humanitarian pause" to Israel's bombardment of Gaza but stopped short of calling for a ceasefire. On Friday, many European nations chose to abstain from the vote on the humanitarian resolution on Gaza at the UN General Assembly, rather than "take sides." One political observer noted: "In this situation, faced with genocide, we must take the side of humanity."

Earlier this week, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen reaffirmed EU support for Israel, saying it had the right to self-defense in line with international law; she also blamed Hamas for provoking the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Her remarks came after Human Rights Watch director Tirana Hassan condemned both Hamas and Israel for targeting innocent civilians.

Hassan testified on Wednesday to the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights. "You cannot wipe out entire families, let a health system be destroyed, raze entire districts to the ground, refer to people as "animals." You can't punish an entire population by preventing desperately needed aid from reaching them. International humanitarian law is clear: Atrocities from one side do not justify atrocities from the other side."

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