

The Gaza Blockade: Humanitarian Emergency

One Year Later, We4Gaza

By [we4Gaza](#)

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One year ago we issued a call to the European Parliament and to the EU High Representative for foreign affairs to reconsider, actualize and enact the deliberations already previously approved that could grant the opening of the Rafah border under EUBAM, and to start collection of funds and issue a tender for the reconstruction of the port in Gaza.

The “humanitarian emergency” that led Gaza to be without medicines, sewage, commerce and jobs has been planned carefully and enacted harshly along years by Israeli.

We asked that Europe act to grant a port and stably opened borders. We did not call for the opening any other border under Israeli control. Under the claim of prevention of “dual use” (use of merchandise other than for civilian purposes) Israeli have reduced, prohibited, tricked and controlled the arrival in Gaza of everything along 11 years, eventually determining the present scarcity. Is this control that needs to be removed.

Our call was directed to Europe because of the potential through its previous deliberations for a port and for guarding the borders to rapidly activate the autonomous development for Gaza, liberating the people from the burden that the Israeli (and Egyptian) blockade impose.

We, one year later, acknowledge that, beside a joint meeting of the E.P. Subcommittee on Human Rights and Delegation for relations with Palestine, no priority was given to any of the actions for Gaza by the European High Representative, the European Commission or the Parliament.

Meanwhile, the blockade was aggravated further by the Israeli Government and through internal and proxy measures, the Rafah border was closed almost year long up to the second week of Ramadan (3rd week of June), UNRWA funds were cut by US, and it is menaced itself of closure and on the verge of having to cut educational and health services and food assistance to up to 80% of the Gaza residents. According to Israeli there is “no refugee issue” and no responsibility of providing by the sieging party.

Meanwhile, the Great March for Return has shown the will and determination not of few but of a generation of Gaza youth to take an unarmed path of political protest against the blockade, to request freedom. Unequivocally, and in unity, the population of Gaza is asking for autonomy and freedom to reach outside for commerce, study, work, visiting, developing.

It requests the lifting of the blockade without ambiguity. This is surely conflicting with the

Israeli project of continuing to control every aspect of life in Gaza, as reflected also in the criminal aggression that confronted the people in the March.

Meanwhile, the situation evolved with the announcement by Israel Government of its will to solve the “humanitarian crisis”, and by US of the “deal of the century” for Palestine. The core issue on the agenda is the port for Gaza.

The way Israeli proposed to build a port does not include removal of the blockade, but charging its costs and responsibility on the international community, or on a coalition of willing parties while continuing the total control. It contains at the same time the potential, in similarity to the talks within the Oslo peace process, of consolidating its expansion and power even without building the seaport.

This cannot breed peace and development.

It is impossible to think of peace without justice and there is no justice without recognition of the Palestinians’ rights, their autonomy and the end of the siege of Gaza.

In this political context, a further standstill of decision by Europe, would be acceptance if not collaboration with the political and practical process of occupation by Israeli; a clear position must be taken rapidly to remove the blockade.

The Israeli claim is: “we want peace and we want to build a port to solve the humanitarian situation of Gaza”, but “we cannot trust in any foreigner’s hands the security of our country, we have to protect ourselves from the risk of dual use”, thus we have to be the exclusive controllers of the port. This imply continuation of the blockade.

The proposal of a port for Gaza it itself is no news; in time it was presented once and again, always to be cancelled. It was already part of the Oslo agreement (a port was even built and shortly destroyed by bombing), it had sunk into oblivion after Israeli opposed its reconstruction by Europe in the early 2000, it was resuscitated in 2011 by Israeli Minister Kahz, and it was one of the requests from Gaza at the armistice at the end of the 2014 attacks.

The proposal now seem designed to go ahead due to the support from allies who grant to foster, perfect and reinforce the legitimacy of the blockade. It couples the claim to fulfill an “humanitarian urgency” with pressure on the international community, under the condition that the Israeli will control the location and functioning of a port for Gaza.

There is no difference in (or the need for) a seaport when its rules of functioning will be the same as those of the existing the land borders, that enforced the blockade of Gaza for the last 11 years. Such a port would not relieve Gaza from the total, historically arbitrary and oppressive, most often punitive, when not openly criminal, control of Israel on the population.

In the Israeli plan for a port or in the proposal called “the deal of the century” by US (still to be fully unveiled), there is no promise of positive change for Gaza people or of substantial relief from the blockade does not mean that there is not a reason of profit for Israel and its allies.

The common denominators of the vented proposals of seaport for Gaza by Israeli and US,

and other supporters, intertwine with each other:

1- In all the proposals the seaport is not on Palestinian land. The locations proposed being El Arish in Egypt, Cyprus or a in more creative version, a new artificial island ashore off Gaza. Security is claimed as the reason for these choices, but it emerges that it may not be the only reason, as below.

2- In all the proposals is requested that the expenses to build and run the seaport will be sustained by “international parties”; these may vary according to the proposed location of the seaport, suggesting that there would be an open tender to the best offer to support the Israeli’s continuing hegemony on Gaza and foster its extension in the Mediterranean. Israel will be the one to give ultimate permission to build a seaport, subject to forward political, practical control of the blockade of Gaza, and to acquire more profits and political power in the Mediterranean area at large.

3- In all the proposals the unique controller of the port will be Israeli, its rules prevailing over any international set of rules. Israel will be the one to determine the rules of function, decide who works there, who serves in the security, in the services etc. and, off course, what and who passes through, by a set of self-determined rules of sort. Since the expenses for this will be on the international community, this will thus legitimate these rules, analogous to those which rule now the land border of Gaza denying freedom for Gaza at any level.

The “deal of the century” indeed, from every point of view, but only for Israel.

We demanded one year ago, and continue to ask, that Europe takes the responsibility of the disasters that its blind support for Israeli governments have produced and continue to allow to be conducted in Palestine, and acts to restore the legitimate rights to freedom for the people of Gaza.

We asked that Europe will use mechanisms already in existence, that could most rapidly grant the self determination of the Palestinians as to what they commerce, who they commerce with, who will travel and who will return home.

We demanded a year ago, and still demand, that Europe acts towards the release of Gaza from the blockade by exercising equity towards the people of Gaza in agreement with international laws and UN deliberations.

Any other position, in the present circumstances would be collaboration to further the enslavement of Gaza people and the dissolution of Palestine.

And it is also highly the time that Europe shows to his own people that words so often used like “equity” and “concern for human rights” and “autonomy of the people” signify actions.

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