EU HEADLINES

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF EUROPEAN DEBATES

Shoot first, shoot more later

The International Court of Justice is hearing the case against Israel, accused of committing genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza, as the international public grows more anxious over the potential spillover of violence across the region.

European Headlines is a weekly newsletter from the European Movement International highlighting media perspectives from across Europe. Click here to subscribe.



Spell disaster

Having crossed its three-month mark, the Israeli onslaught in Gaza remains intense as more than 23,000 Palestinians have been killed and millions displaced, reports *The Irish Times*. Contrary to public declarations on scaling back the military campaign, Israeli ground advances in the southern and central areas of the Gaza Strip impelled the World Health Organisation to cancel a planned medical aid mission for the sixth time in two weeks due to security concerns. Amidst the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation and growing unease over the potential spread of violence across the region, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Palestinian, Israeli and neighbouring Arab states' leadership on his fourth trip to the region since the war began. Against the backdrop of the mounting solidarity attacks in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen by armed groups allegedly supported by Iran and the destabilisation of maritime security in the Red Sea, Blinken expressed support for a Palestinian state, discussed efforts to protect and aid civilians in Gaza, and appealed for uprooted residents to be allowed to return to their homes, a point strongly enforced by Jordan and Egypt but taken with a mount of salt by Gazans.

Read the full article



Hour of need

Incessant Israeli airstrikes are of equal threat to the civilian lives in Gaza as the deteriorating humanitarian situation, according to Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO). Reporting scarcity of food, drinking water, improper sanitation, and overcrowded living conditions, Ghebreyesus called for an immediate ceasefire and the securing of humanitarian corridors to distribute aid across the whole of the Gaza Strip, where only 15 hospitals remain partly operational and an estimated three litres of water per person is available daily, compared to the WTO recommended 50-100 litres norm to maintain health and sanitation. Although Israel says the number of trucks with humanitarian aid has increased to 200 per day, the north of the Palestinian territories has been inaccessible for WHO missions since 26 December. As reported by *The Brussels Times*, the international organisations have "the supplies, the teams and the plans in place" but are unable to use them due to the bombings, fuel shortages, and disrupted communications imposed by Israel.

Read the full article



Shared historical struggle

French newspaper *Le Monde* analyses the reasons behind the complaint addressed to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) by South Africa – the country is calling for UN judges to urge Israel to "immediately suspend its military operations" in the Gaza Strip. The request, sent to the UN Court on Thursday 11 January, underlines that Israel is engaging in "acts of genocide", an accusation that Israel calls an "absurd blood libel". The ruling party in South Africa has been a staunch defender of the Palestinian cause, associating it with the fight against apartheid. President Cyril Ramaphosa declared that South Africa has a "duty to stand up and support the Palestinians." According to the article, this move could also serve other purposes: for the first time, South Africa's ruling party risks losing its parliamentary majority during the next elections, and it might be trying to appeal to its large Muslim population with this court case. The second reason would be an attempt on the part of the country to gain ground on the international scene: South Africa is part of the BRICS (with Brazil, Russia, India, China) and is trying to act as a counterweight to the Western coalition led by the USA and Europe. The article gloomily concludes that even though the ICJ's decisions are legally binding, the Court has no power to enforce them.

Read the full article



Breaking the camel's back

After three months of war in the Gaza Strip claiming over 23,000 Palestinian lives and displacing millions more, observers fear the conflict escalating even more and spilling further into the region, writes *El País*. Israel continues its siege on Gaza in its so-called war on Hamas, but is also trading shots with Hezbollah, based out of southern Lebanon, while Houthis out of Yemen are attacking vessels in the Red Sea shipping route. The conflict flared over the weekend when, in response to the assassination of Hamas' deputy leader last week, Hezbollah fired over 60 rockets at an IDF post, which was met with IDF artillery attacks followed by ground and air assaults against Hezbollah positions. International representatives now fear continued escalation. Turkey is ready to mediate if needed, while US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and High Representative of the EU Josep Borrell are urgently calling for containment and de-escalation. Further, Borrell has reiterated his much-repeated call on Israel to change its tactics in order to protect civilian life. Israeli authorities consider the country to be the center of a multi-front war. Despite that, myriad calls for ceasefire, and a trial at the Hague, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu nonetheless refuses to consider a ceasefire.

Read the full article

Copyright © The European Movement International, all rights reserved.
The European Movement International
Place du Luxembourg 2, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

This is a weekly newsletter from the European Movement International.
Click here to subscribe.