



## **2023 Autumn Meeting of the OSCE PA**

**Mediterranean Forum | 20 November 2023**

### **Closing remarks by OSCE PA President Pia Kauma**

Merci Pascal, ce fut un débat très intense et très bien géré.

Dear colleagues,

It is obvious that the conflict between Israel and Palestine is polarizing.

It has been the topic of heated debates for more than 75 years.

It is a conflict which inflames many other divides in our societies - between left and right, between young and old, between religions, between ethnicities...

Bearing this in mind, I certainly did not expect that this debate would lead to consensus.

But there are things that I am sure we can all agree on:

1. The 7 October terrorist attacks must be unequivocally condemned. They have no justification. Hostages must be released. We appreciate Israel's efforts to share as much information as possible on these attacks to combat denialism.
2. Israel has the right to self-defense. Israel's military operation must focus on disarming terrorist groups in full accordance with international humanitarian law.

3. We are all deeply concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and its devastating effect on women and children in particular.
4. It is our collective responsibility to protect human life and human dignity. Humanitarian pauses must allow assistance to reach those in need.
5. We must remain vigilant and vigorously combat anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim bigotry and violence.
6. A long-term, sustainable settlement of the conflict between Israel and Palestine can only be found through a two-state solution. The international community must bring renewed impetus to these negotiations.

Dear colleagues,

As many of you have expressed during this debate, we as parliamentarians cannot remain spectators of this dreadful war.

It is our duty to work towards peace, and it is our responsibility to be the bridge-builders in this war. These atrocities simply must stop.

As the late Nobel Peace Prize winner President Martti Ahtisaari commented on several occasions, “all wars can be ended if only there is enough political will.”

Dear colleagues,

Let's do our duty as politicians. Let's show to the world that we have that political will to find long-standing peace in this region. Together we can do it.

Thank you.