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REPORT BY MR PASCAL ALLIZARD,  
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**For the Standing Committee**

*29th June 2025*

Dear Madam President

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You will understand that my report naturally focuses on the **situation in the Near and Middle East**, a hotbed of tensions and crises on the periphery of the OSCE area proper, where our partner countries around the Mediterranean are fully involved.

From Oporto, open to the Atlantic, I would like to remind you of the central role of the Mare Nostrum that is our Mediterranean, a maritime, economic, political and human space that we would like to unite rather than divide. We must work towards this goal.

So much has happened since our winter meeting in Vienna in February, in just four months!

**In my capacity as Special Rapporteur, I took part in the mission to Israel and the Palestinian territories from 7 to 11 March**, together with our President Pia Kauma, the Vice-Presidents Father Joan Pons, Luis Graça and Kyriakos Hadjoanni, and our Secretary General Roberto Montella.

This mission was in response to an invitation from the Israeli delegation to the OSCE PA, which is one of the delegations that we meet regularly as part of my mission to the Mediterranean partner countries. There are six of them: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Israel. We are also in regular contact with the Knesseth, which invited us this time, and also, more or less intermittently, with the Palestinian National Council, which is based in Ramallah but has not held elections since 2005... During our mission, contacts in Ramallah were facilitated by the Cypriot representation, but also by the Finnish representative, whom I would like to thank.

Inter-religious dialogue and the protection of Christians in particular is one of the issues we addressed during our long exchange with the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilus III, who is the guardian of part of the Holy Sepulchre.

For my part, I had some interesting discussions with the French Consulate General, which plays a role of political and diplomatic representation to the Palestinian authorities, completely independent of the French Embassy in Tel Aviv, which has exclusive diplomatic contacts with the State of Israel,

With this framework in mind, in the space of a few days we were able to meet a **wide range of high-level political leaders, both in Israel and in the Palestinian territories**, as well as players from Palestinian and Israeli civil society, senior members of the Israeli army, and residents of the kibbutzim bordering Gaza, devastated by the massacres of 7 October, and those on the Lebanese border to the north, devastated by Hezbollah attacks.

We were unable to go to Gaza even before the ceasefire broke down, but we did cross part of the West Bank.

**This field mission was both necessary and useful**, given the growing importance of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the debates and concerns of the OSCE PA. Located on the periphery of the OSCE area, it nevertheless has a major impact on it, and particularly affects us Europeans and partner countries who share the Mediterranean.

My first concern as Special Representative for Mediterranean Affairs is to **maintain dialogue with each of the parties to the conflict**, on the side of the State of Israel and Israeli civil society, but also on the Palestinian side, where the question of the statehood of the Palestinian Authority and its structures clearly arises. Powerful and organised NGOs operate there, such as the Palestinian Red Crescent, with whom we had long discussions at their headquarters in Ramallah, which controls or supervises all humanitarian and health operations, including in Gaza, using sophisticated equipment and dedicated humanitarian teams.

We were unable to meet representatives of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA),

which has been completely dismantled by Israeli operations and many of whose employees are, according to the Israeli authorities, affiliated to Hamas.

**The question of access for NGOs and humanitarian workers to Gaza remains all the more acute and urgent** because the ceasefire was broken by the Israeli army on 17 March, six days after our return. Humanitarian access to Gaza was "suspended" by Israel on 2 March, in the middle of the ceasefire at the time.

UNRWA nevertheless remains very active in the West Bank, particularly in the refugee camps, which are the target of recurrent Israeli strikes.

The Red Crescent officials we met continue their work tirelessly, without concealing a certain discouragement: the Israeli army fires on its ambulances.

For its part, the army accuses Hamas of concealing weapons and even hostages under the guise of medical transport.

**Israeli society is clearly still deeply traumatised by the extreme violence of the attacks of 7 October**, filmed by the terrorists themselves. We have seen these unbearable images. We have heard recordings from the phones of very young terrorists bragging to their families about their abominable acts of violence. We have visited the homes of some of the hostages and victims, met their relatives, their families and their neighbours. We walked around the Nova festival site, between photos of young people massacred by the hundreds and dozens of hostages, some of whom are still being held, alive or dead, among the

bereaved families who keep the memory alive on this site, planting eucalyptus trees among the blood-coloured poppies.

We were received by the Speaker of the Knesseth and the Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs. We had a long discussion with the chairman of the Israeli delegation. My impression is that there is a degree of unity across the whole of the Israeli political spectrum in the face of what it perceives as a constant threat to the security of a country whose vulnerability was demonstrated on 7 October, despite the violence and the mass murderous nature of the responses that followed.

On the Palestinian side, we spoke with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is of Armenian and Christian origin, and with the Vice-President of the Palestinian National Council, under the portraits of Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas, wondering just what authority Fatah could possibly represent to Palestinian youth.

At this stage, however, we have seen little sign of a structured, constructed political "offer" that could provide a glimpse of a truly credible institutional and democratic future, to rebuild a lasting order on the ruins of the emergency.

Nonetheless, there remains a glimmer of hope, a glimmer of optimism, in the face of the bombs that are once again raining down.

Yes, **there is a prospect of reconstruction**, which all our Palestinian interlocutors seem to want to cling to and which not all Israelis reject out of hand.

This is the famous "Arab plan", in fact essentially prepared with Egypt and supported by Arab leaders, to finally **be able to glimpse the day**

**after, gradually, step by step, with the population of the Gaza Strip and longer-term governance.** I should point out that France supports it. And Europe too, in my opinion, should support it, so that it can finally become a player rather than a spectator in a process that could lead to a solution.

The European Union, which continues to invest several tens of millions of euros in humanitarian aid that is increasingly difficult to deliver and obstructed by numerous obstacles, but whose financial support the Palestinian Authority is awaiting. Europe's voice is hardly heard, but its action is nonetheless expected. **This region so desperately needs stability and peace!**

7 October and its aftermath have stifled Israeli pacifism and opposition to the current course of war. But it has not definitively extinguished **the hope of a two-state solution**, which remains, despite everything, audible. In my view, it is important not to compromise on **a political solution, even beyond the obvious humanitarian emergencies.**

This issue was on the agenda of the discussions we had with our Cypriot colleagues from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Irene Charalambides, whom I met when she took part in the OECD conference on the fight against corruption, and Kyriakos Hadjoanni, on the ground, during our mission last March. We discussed the situation in the region, where **Cyprus is geographically at the forefront and plays an extremely important humanitarian role**, alongside other participating states and partners. Unfortunately, the situation on the ground has deteriorated considerably since then. **Sadly, the war in Gaza continues**

**apace**, with over a thousand people killed and more than 4,000 injured in the last twelve days. To date, more than 56,000 people have been killed and 132,000 wounded in the war. On 24 June, the families of the Israeli hostages called on the government to put an end to the war in Gaza and secure the release of the hostages through negotiations as swift as those that led to the ceasefire with Iran. On 26 June, a poll published in *Al Ayyam* showed that 67% of Israelis were in favour of ending the operations in Gaza.

**More than ever, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly must continue to encourage political dialogue, peace and security.**

In this context, the hopes for stability in **Lebanon** that we could still harbour during our field mission in March are still very fragile, while the Israeli army has carried out incursions and struck numerous targets.

We should also be alarmed by the situation in **Syria**, where several deadly terrorist attacks have been carried out, notably against a Christian church on 22 June. The Syrian transitional authorities, at the highest level, reacted quickly and unanimously, denouncing an attempt to destabilise the country, and calling for unity against terrorism, with the support in particular of a neighbouring participating state. We must remain extremely attentive to developments in these two countries and do everything we can to encourage lasting stability and security, through an inclusive transition in Syria.

Other points of extreme vigilance exist in the Mediterranean region, particularly in **Libya**, where it is imperative to relaunch a political process and strengthen security.

Finally, I'd like to turn to the very recent conflict in **Iran, where the ceasefire of 24 June is still holding** and is being respected by all parties, as we begin our annual session in Oporto.

This conflict is outside the OSCE region and the Mediterranean region proper. However, it naturally has an impact through its consequences and has also directly involved a partner country and a participating State.

With regard to the death toll from the 12 days of war, the Iranian authorities put the figure at 650 dead and almost 5,000 wounded, while the Human Rights Activists News Agency (based in the United States) put it at 1,054 dead, including 417 civilians, and 4,476 wounded (including around 2,000 civilians). According to Israeli defence and media sources, Israel has struck more than 1,480 targets, used more than 3,500 munitions and carried out more than 1,500 air sorties in its military campaign, while Iran has fired approximately 600 missiles against Israeli territory. They are said to have damaged more than 30,000 buildings in Israel. In addition to the command and military and security infrastructures, the Israeli strikes targeted energy infrastructures and places with a high symbolic value for the regime, such as the state media IRIB and Evin prison in Teheran.

The six-monthly meeting to monitor the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 was held in New York on 24 June. The Council generally welcomed the announcement of a ceasefire between Israel and Iran, although criticism continued to be levelled at the US strikes.

**Repression intensifies in Iran.** The Iranian intelligence services have arrested more than 700 people suspected of acting on behalf of Israel

since the start of the Israeli military campaign, according to the IRGC-affiliated news agency Fars News. According to the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, the Iranian authorities have arrested more than 823 people for political or security-related reasons. Several arrests, notably of European nationals accused of espionage, have been reported by the authorities and the press.

Here too, **we must ensure the protection of the people of Iran and the whole region, and encourage political and security dialogue by hoping for the resumption of negotiations** with Iran to reach a long-term peace agreement. We need to open up this space for negotiation, so that the Iranian nuclear programme and the threat of destabilisation in the region, and indeed the OSCE area as a whole, can be permanently reduced.