

OPEN LETTER

1 October 2025

Dear President of the European Parliament, Ms Roberta Metsola,

Dear Vice President, Ms Ewa Kopacz,

Dear members of the LIBE and AFET Committees,

We are writing to you to express our concerns and request your assistance **regarding children who are still trapped in Gaza despite positive family reunification decisions** issued by member states.

More specifically, complaints have been brought to the attention of our members concerning many children and their mothers, for whom the competent national authorities have approved the requests for reunification with their families in EU member states. Nevertheless, the decisions are not being implemented, and children still remain in Gaza as there are no organised interventions and coordination between states and stakeholders that would allow the identification and safe extraction of these children from the area.

Overall, it is evident that measures have to be taken immediately for all similar cases by the European Union and all member states to ensure a safe exit from Gaza for these children and their families, as well as their access to the respective embassies to get a visa.

The situation in Gaza is well known to the European Parliament and, as the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children has highlighted in its recent statement,¹ the conditions for children in Gaza have become unlivable. Gaza has been largely destroyed. Over 92% of the homes have been destroyed; schools, hospitals, playgrounds, and essential infrastructure have been badly damaged or demolished. More than 60,000 people have been

¹ [ENOC ad-hoc Position Statement on “Children in Gaza must be protected at all costs and their rights restored. An Urgent call to uphold international law”, August 2025.](#)

killed. According to UNICEF, which issued a statement for the “unimaginable horrors” in Gaza, more than 50,000 children have reportedly been killed or injured since October 2023. Children are wounded, separated from their families or orphaned, traumatised, displaced, or permanently disabled. Basic survival resources – water, food, electricity, and medical care – have been deliberately blocked. A growing number of children suffer from acute malnutrition, psychological trauma, and lack of access to medical care. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child underlined, once again, that famine has now taken hold in Gaza. Malnutrition among children is accelerating at a catastrophic pace. The Committee echoed the multiple UN agencies’ warning that, without immediate and unhindered humanitarian access, the manmade famine will spread, and more children will die.²

The legal framework supporting the implementation of these decisions is strong and includes the Convention Related to the Status of Refugees (articles 12, 23, and 25) as well as the European Convention on Human Rights (articles 2,3, and 8).

But as all EU member states have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, we would like to ask you to examine all these cases, mainly in the light of the UNCRC and, more specifically:

Article 3: In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities, or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

Article 6: Children have an inherent right to life, survival, and development.

Article 9: States Parties shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child.

Article 10: Children's applications for family reunification shall be dealt with by States Parties in a positive, humane and expeditious manner.

² [United Nations, « Gaza : UN Child Rights Committee condemns using starvation of children as weapon of war », September 2025.](#)

Article 19: Children must be protected from all forms of violence.

Finally, according to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, “In all actions relating to children, whether taken by public authorities or private institutions, the child’s best interests must be a primary consideration.” (art. 24 par.2).

In view of the above, we urge the European Parliament to take action in every direction to fulfil these requests for family reunification, thereby **bringing children to safety**. In addition, we call on you to urge member states to take all necessary steps to ensure the reunification of these children with their families.

Sincerely,

The ENOC Bureau:

Vasile COROI, ENOC Chair, The People’s Advocate for the Rights of the Child, Moldova

Aida Rodriguez GIMENEZ, ENOC Chair-elect, Deputy Ombudsman for Children’s Rights, Catalonia, Spain

Elina PEKKARINEN, ENOC Past-Chair, Ombudsman for Children, Finland

Chris QUINN, ENOC Secretary, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children & Young People

Niall MULDOON, ENOC Treasurer, Ombudsman for Children, Ireland

Caroline VRIJENS, ordinary member, Children’s Rights Commissioner, Flanders, Belgium

Andres ARU, ordinary member, Head of Children and Youth Rights Department, Chancellor of Justice, Estonia