

Press Release

Filing of a complaint regarding police violence during the demonstration of 2 October 2025

On 2 October, the Global Sumud Flotilla was unlawfully intercepted by the Israeli army in international waters while attempting to break the humanitarian blockade imposed on Gaza and to draw attention to the genocide against the Palestinian people. In response, many people across Europe took to the streets, in solidarity both with the Palestinian cause and with the arrested members of the flotilla, to express their outrage and denounce the inaction of European governments.

In Brussels, these spontaneous and intergenerational demonstrations, bringing together students, families, elderly people and persons with disabilities, remained peaceful until they were forcefully dispersed by the police at around 9 p.m.

After a gathering in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, demonstrations took place at Place du Luxembourg, in front of the European Parliament, and at the Bourse. During the evening, demonstrators attempted to regroup. Without warning and without apparent reason, a large number of riot police officers, supported by plainclothes officers with covered faces, carried out a violent charge against our two groups, although we posed no threat.

During this charge, we accuse the police of:

- using pepper spray and tear gas against us, including at close range;
- forcing us to run, creating panic without any possibility of escape;
- intimidating us by striking their shields and leg guards with batons, shouting, and uttering threats and insults, including sexist remarks;
- striking us with batons, kicks and punches.

The unlawful encirclement technique¹ was also used, as well as water cannons.

We also observed that the police officers involved did not display visible identification, and several of them had their faces covered.

Several of us are filing a complaint today against the Brussels-Capital police zone and against X (as the identity of the officers involved is unknown to us). Several people were injured and had to be treated in emergency departments, mainly for open head wounds and/or bruises caused by baton blows. One person lost consciousness after being struck on the head with a baton and was left without assistance by the officers present. Several of us were declared unfit for work for periods of up to three weeks. As most victims remain anonymous, the full extent of the damage suffered is very likely underestimated. Among the victims are also journalists who were covering the demonstration without taking part in it; one of them has joined the complaint.

In the aftermath of the events, some of us had already filed complaints with Committee P. Six months later, we have received no information regarding these complaints. Given the

¹ <https://bx1.be/categories/news/la-technique-de-la-nasse-pourrait-etre-reutilisee-la-ligue-des-droits-humains-extremement-preoccupee-par-les-propos-de-philippe-close/>

seriousness of the facts, in a context of an unprecedented wave of severe police violence during demonstrations², we have decided to bring the matter before the Public Prosecutor.

The day after the events, Amnesty International called for an investigation “*into the decision to disperse the demonstrations and the police force that was used*”³. Political representatives also expressed their intention to question the Minister of the Interior, Bernard Quintin, and the Mayor of Brussels, Philippe Close, recalling that “*demonstrating is a fundamental right in a democracy*”⁴. The CGSP Police union, for its part, called for a parliamentary inquiry and denounced the actions of certain officers, stressing in particular that “*peaceful demonstrators are treated as enemies rather than citizens*”, and warning of “*a potentially dangerous escalation for democracy*”⁵.

We are shocked that such violence was used against our peaceful demonstration, putting our physical and mental integrity at risk. We believe this constitutes a clear violation of our freedom to demonstrate, which is protected by national and international law.

On Thursday 2 April at 9 a.m., we invite the press to gather at Place Poelaert, where, accompanied by our lawyers, we will officially file the complaint with the Public Prosecutor.

The collective of victims of 2 October.

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² The national strike day of 14 October 2025, the eviction of the undocumented persons’ collective “Zone Neutre” from Square de l’Aviation on 17 October 2025, the police repression of striking teachers on 10 November 2025, that of the strike day of 12 March 2026, and the eviction of the Carnaval Sauvage on 22 March 2026.

³ <https://www.amnesty.be/infos/actualites/violences-policieres-bruxelles>

⁴ <https://www.rtb.be/article/ecolo-et-groen-denoncent-la-brutalite-policiere-apres-les-manifestations-pour-gaza-de-jeudi-dernier-11611902>

⁵ <https://www.lesoir.be/708239/article/2025-10-31/un-syndicat-policier-denonce-des-violences-policieres-lors-des-manifestations>