

EU to launch a humanitarian air bridge to bring aid to Gaza



The European Union said on Monday it would launch a humanitarian air bridge operation consisting of “several flights” to Egypt aiming to bring supplies to humanitarian organisations on the ground in Gaza.

“The first two flights will take place this week, carrying humanitarian cargo from UNICEF including shelter items, medicines and hygiene kits,” the EU said in a statement.

Diplomatic efforts to arrange a ceasefire to let aid reach the besieged Gaza Strip failed earlier, and Israel ordered the evacuation of villages in a strip of territory near its border with Lebanon, raising fears the war could spread to a new front.

“Palestinians in Gaza are in need of humanitarian help and aid, they cannot pay the price of Hamas’ barbarism,” European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told a press conference in Tirana.

Von der Leyen was attending a summit of the Berlin Process, an initiative started

by the German government to improve cooperation between six Western Balkans countries aspiring to become EU members. She noted that the EU had decided over the weekend to triple its humanitarian assistance, to over 75 million euros, to support civilians in need in Gaza.

Israel has vowed to annihilate the Hamas movement that rules Gaza, after its fighters burst across the barrier surrounding the enclave on Oct. 7, gunning down 1,300 Israelis, mainly civilians, in the deadliest day in Israel's 75-year history.

It has put Gaza, home to 2.3 million Palestinians, under a total blockade and pounded it with unprecedented air strikes, and is widely expected to launch a ground assault. Gaza authorities say at least 2,750 people have been killed there, including many civilians.

vema.com.au