

April 16th 2026

Dear President von der Leyen,  
Dear High Representative / Vice-President Kallas,  
Dear Foreign Ministers of the EU member states,

We, the undersigned humanitarian and human rights organisations and trade unions, write to you as Israeli authorities escalate their brutal repression and illegal annexation policies in Palestine, and violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) in Palestine and Lebanon to urge you to adopt the long-overdue measures proposed by President von der Leyen in [September](#) 2025, in particular the suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement, along with any additional steps necessary to comply with international law, including banning trade with illegal Israeli settlements and suspending all transfers and transit of arms to Israel.

Already in June 2025, the EU had [found](#) Israel in breach of **Article 2** of the EU-Israel Association Agreement, which identifies respect of human rights and democratic principles as “essential elements” of the treaty. Ongoing actions by Israeli authorities in Israel, throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and in Lebanon further compound that breach, and are causing immense suffering to millions throughout the region.

Last month, the Israeli Knesset passed a discriminatory **death penalty law** that significantly expands the scope and application of the death penalty, in effect targeting Palestinians only. The law is not only an egregious violation of the rights to life and fair trial of Palestinians, but also adds to the growing body of discriminatory legislation and policies implemented by Israeli authorities against Palestinians, which the International Court of Justice has found to violate Article 3 CERD, which prohibits racial segregation and apartheid, in its Advisory Opinion of July 2024. Numerous UN bodies and experts, Palestinian, Israeli and international human rights organizations, and renowned legal scholars, have also documented how these policies and legislation amount to the system and crime against humanity of apartheid.

In the occupied **West Bank**, Israel is accelerating its illegal annexation policies and practices and is intensifying repression and serious abuses against Palestinians. Since the start of the war with Iran and Lebanon, the situation has severely worsened. Since 28 February, Israeli authorities have imposed strict movement restrictions across the OPT. In addition to previously existing check-points, dozens of new road [gates](#) have been installed by Israeli authorities in the West Bank since October 2023, most of which are now closed, severely impacting Palestinians’ access to their lands, workplaces, schools, health and emergency services. Moreover, Israeli forces and state-backed settlers have increased attacks against Palestinians, with over [200 attacks](#) in March alone, including reports of [sexual abuse](#). According to UN [OCHA](#) this year Israeli forces and settlers have killed 34 Palestinians, including seven children and injured 771, including 97 children. Attacks are increasingly directed towards larger Palestinian villages in area B, spreading through the West Bank. Since October 2023, state-backed settler violence has led to the displacement of [38 entire Palestinian communities](#). Less than three months into 2026, [1700 Palestinians](#) have been displaced, already surpassing the total for the whole of 2025. For violent settlers, [impunity](#) remains the norm: according

to Israeli NGOs, only 3% of cases lead to a full or partial conviction. In contrast, for Palestinians the conviction rate in [military courts](#) is 99%.

The increasingly lethal state-backed settler violence goes hand in hand with the acceleration of illegal settlement expansion and **annexation** policies through a [set of measures](#) recently adopted by Israel to displace and dispossess Palestinians in the West Bank. In August 2025, the Israeli Higher Planning Council approved the E1 plan, meant to cut through the occupied Palestinian land, with Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for atrocity crimes, [saying out loud](#) that the E1's goal is to ensure "that there will be no Palestinian state". In illegally annexed East Jerusalem, Israeli authorities forcibly evicted 15 Palestinian families, including 29 children, from their homes in Batn al-Hawa in Silwan last month. At least 200 other families in the neighbourhood face the risk of forced eviction to enable the unlawful takeover of their homes by settler organizations.

Meanwhile, more than 9560 Palestinians are held in [Israeli detention](#), half of whom are held without charges or trial, either under administrative detention or under the Unlawful Combatants' Law. Israel currently detains 351 Palestinian [children](#), with more than half held in administrative detention without charge or trial. UN experts, Palestinian and Israeli NGOs have documented systematic torture and inhuman and degrading treatment against Palestinian prisoners, and Israeli authorities continue to deny the ICRC access to all places of detention.

In the occupied **Gaza Strip**, the Israel-made humanitarian catastrophe persists. Israel remains in breach of three binding orders of the International Court of Justice in the case brought by South Africa for alleged violation of the UN Genocide Convention, including to ensure unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance, and to preserve evidence. The UN Commission of Inquiry, alongside numerous human rights organisations and legal scholars, has found that Israeli authorities have committed and are continuing to commit genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Since the start of a so-called ceasefire in October 2025, at least 736 Palestinians have been [killed](#). Airstrikes, shelling and gunfire continues on both sides of the so-called "Yellow Line", a temporary military demarcation that now risks evolving into an enduring territorial division. In the meantime, newly introduced registration requirements, which violate established humanitarian principles and data protection laws, allowed the Israeli authorities to further restrict the operational space for dozens of international humanitarian organizations.

Israeli policies throughout the OPT run counter the obligations laid out in the July 2024 **advisory opinion** of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which found Israel's occupation to be unlawful and marred by serious abuses, including Israel's breach of Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which prohibits racial segregation and apartheid. The Court clarified Israel should end its occupation, dismantle its settlements, allow Palestinians to return to their homes and provide them with reparations for the harm suffered.

Several experts have warned about the possible "Gazafication" of the conflict in **Lebanon**, where Israeli forces have [displaced](#) over 1.2 million people, around one fifth of the country's population, in their offensive against Hezbollah, following [overly broad evacuation orders](#) which do not constitute effective guarantees of protection. The Israeli military has targeted [healthcare facilities and workers](#),

journalists, and civilian infrastructure, including bridges, which will severely impact the ability to deliver food for the people who cannot or choose not to leave their homes, and who should continue to be protected under IHL. Israeli authorities indicated the area would become a “buffer zone” in which all Lebanese homes in border villages will be destroyed and Israel will maintain control over the south of Lebanon up to the Litani river, as stated by [Minister Katz](#).

These developments come on the heels of decades of toothless EU statements of concern and calls for a "two-state solution" that have been largely ignored by Israeli authorities, to no consequences. We welcome commitments by five member states (Spain, Ireland, Slovenia, Belgium, and The Netherlands) to ban imports of goods from illegal Israeli settlements, as required by international law and the ICJ's advisory opinion of July 2024, and commend Spain for having already banned the imports of goods and advertisements of both goods and services from illegal Israeli settlements as of September 2025. We urge the EU to do the same, in compliance with Articles 3(5) and 21(1) TEU, and in line with its longstanding, unanimous condemnation of Israeli settlement policies as illegal and an "obstacle to a two-state solution" that the EU claims to pursue.

To date, no qualified majority has been reached in the Council to suspend the trade provisions of the **EU-Israel Association Agreement**, despite repeated calls from member states, Members of the European Parliament, civil society and [the European public](#). This failure to act risks rendering the Association Agreement's human rights clause meaningless in practice, further tarnishes the EU's credibility and emboldens the sense of impunity fueling Israel's growing abuses. We call on member states to support the suspension of the agreement, and urge the Council to reflect on the reputational, legal and most of all human consequences of continued inaction in the face of mounting evidence of crimes under international law committed by Israel both in Palestine and Lebanon.

The European Union and its member states should immediately **suspend all transfers and transit of arms**, munitions, equipment, technology, parts and dual-use goods to Israel. This obligation is not discretionary but arises under both EU and international law. Article 6 and 7 of the Arms Trade Treaty and the EU Common Position on Arms Exports requires states not to transfer arms to a recipient where a clear risk exists they might be used in serious violation of IHL, as is the case for Israel. In addition, Common Article 1 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions requires that States respect and ensure respect for IHL. While several member states have already suspended arms exports, we urge all remaining states to do so without delay. In addition, the EU should take coordinated action at the institutional level to prevent the transit of arms, components, and dual-use goods through its territory to Israel, including by closing existing regulatory and enforcement gaps.

The patterns documented in this letter are the predictable consequence of decades of impunity: a failure by the international community to hold Israeli authorities accountable, and a willingness to allow political considerations to override legal obligations. What remains absent is the political will to act. The measures we urge in this letter, suspending arms transfers, banning trade with illegal Israeli settlements, and suspending the Association Agreement, are not mere political choices. They are legal obligations. The people of Palestine and Lebanon deserve action and accountability, not concerns and condolences. The time to act is long overdue.

## **Signatories:**

### *International:*

1. ACT Alliance EU
2. ActionAid International
3. Amnesty International
4. Avaaz
5. Bystanders No More
6. CIDSE- International family of Catholic Social Justice Organisations
7. Caritas Europa
8. Ekō
9. EuroMed Rights
10. Global Witness
11. Human Rights Watch
12. International Media Support
13. International Peace Bureau
14. International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
15. Medico International
16. Oxfam
17. Pax Christi International
18. SJES / Society of Jesus
19. SOLIDAR
20. United Against Inhumanity
21. World BEYOND War
22. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)

### *Member state-based:*

23. 11.11.11, Belgium
24. Action des Chrétiens pour l'Abolition de la Torture, Luxembourg
25. ActionAid Denmark
26. Adala for All, France
27. Afri (Action from Ireland), Ireland
28. Ambasada Rog, Slovenia
29. Avocats Sans Frontières, Belgium
30. Belgian Academics and Artists for Palestine (BA4P/BACBI), Belgium
31. Broederlijk Delen, Belgium
32. Centre for Global Education, Ireland
33. Centro Pace ecologia e diritti umani, Italia
34. CGIL, Italy
35. Christian Aid Ireland
36. CISS, Cooperazione Internazionale Sud Sud, Italy
37. CNCD, Belgium

38. Comhlámh Justice for Palestine, Ireland
39. Comité pour une Paix Juste au Proche-Orient, Luxembourg
40. COPE - Cooperazione Paesi Emergenti, Italia
41. COSPE, Italy
42. Danes je nov dan, Inštitut za druga vprašanja, Slovenia
43. Dignity- Danish Institute against Torture, Denmark
44. EDUCO, Spain
45. Een Ander Joods Geluid, The Netherlands
46. Entraide et Fraternité, Belgium
47. European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine, Belgium
48. European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine, Belgium
49. FGTB-ABVV, Belgium
50. Friends of the Earth, Spain
51. Gaza Group GCDG, Belgium
52. Glosa, Slovenia
53. International Committee Against House Demolitions - Germany
54. Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Ireland
55. Jewish Call for Peace, Luxembourg
56. Jews For Palestine Ireland
57. Junts Associació Catalana de Jueus i Palestins, Spain
58. Kairos Ireland
59. Law4Palestine, UK and Sweden
60. Nederlands Palestina Komitee, The Netherlands
61. Olof Palme International Center, Sweden
62. PAX, the Netherlands
63. Peace Institute, Slovenia
64. Platform of French NGOs for Palestine, France
65. Portuguese Platform of Development NGOs, Portugal
66. Pro Peace, Germany
67. Reka Si, Slovenia
68. Sadaka-The Ireland Palestine Alliance, Ireland
69. Slovene Philanthropy, Slovenia
70. Solsoc, Belgium
71. The Rights Forum, The Netherlands
72. Trócaire, Ireland
73. Viva Salud, Belgium
74. Weltfriedensdienst e.V., Germany
75. Women for Peace, Finland
76. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom WILPF Finland
77. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom WILPF Italy
78. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom WILPF Spain