

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. Caritas Europa
7. CIDSE- International family of Catholic Social Justice Organisations
8. Committee to Protect Journalists
9. Ekō
10. EuroMed Rights
11. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
12. Global Witness
13. Human Rights Watch
14. International Media Support
15. International Peace Bureau
16. International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
17. Medico International
18. Oxfam
19. Pax Christi International
20. SJES / Society of Jesus
21. SOLIDAR
22. United Against Inhumanity
23. World BEYOND War
24. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)

### *Member state-based:*

25. 11.11.11, Belgium
26. Act Church of Sweden
27. Action des Chrétiens pour l'Abolition de la Torture, Luxembourg
28. ActionAid Denmark
29. ACV-CSC Belgium
30. Adala for All, France
31. Afri (Action from Ireland), Ireland
32. Ambasada Rog, Slovenia
33. Association France Palestine Solidarité, France
34. Avocats Sans Frontières, Belgium
35. Belgian Academics and Artists for Palestine (BA4P/BACBI), Belgium
36. Broederlijk Delen, Belgium
37. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

38. Centre for Global Education, Ireland
39. Centro Pace ecologia e diritti umani, Italy
40. CGIL, Italy
41. Christian Aid Ireland
42. CISS, Cooperazione Internazionale Sud Sud, Italy
43. CNCD, Belgium
44. Comhlámh, Ireland
45. Comhlámh Justice for Palestine, Ireland
46. Comité pour une Paix Juste au Proche-Orient, Luxembourg
47. Committee to Protect Journalists,
48. COPE - Cooperazione Paesi Emergenti, Italy
49. COSPE, Italy
50. Danes je nov dan, Inštitut za druga vprašanja, Slovenia
51. Diakonia, Sweden
52. Dignity- Danish Institute against Torture, Denmark
53. docP - BDS Netherlands
54. EDUCO, Spain
55. Een Ander Joods Geluid, The Netherlands
56. Entraide et Fraternité, Belgium
57. European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine, Belgium
58. European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine, Belgium
59. FGTB-ABVV, Belgium
60. Friends of the Earth, Spain
61. Gaza Group GCDG, Belgium
62. Glosa, Slovenia
63. International Committee Against House Demolitions - Germany
64. Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Ireland
65. Jewish Call for Peace, Luxembourg
66. Jews For Palestine Ireland
67. Junts Associació Catalana de Jueus i Palestins, Spain
68. Kairos Ireland
69. Law4Palestine, UK and Sweden
70. Ligue des droits humains (LDH), France
71. Nederlands Palestina Komitee, The Netherlands
72. Olof Palme International Center, Sweden
73. Palestina Solidariteit vzw, Belgium
74. PAX, the Netherlands
75. Peace Institute, Slovenia
76. Platform of French NGOs for Palestine, France
77. Portuguese Platform of Development NGOs, Portugal
78. Pro Peace, Germany
79. Reka Si, Slovenia
80. Sadaka-The Ireland Palestine Alliance, Ireland
81. Slovene Philanthropy, Slovenia
82. Solsoc, Belgium

83. Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, Sweden
84. SweFOR, Sweden
85. The Rights Forum, The Netherlands
86. The Palestine Solidarity Association in Sweden
87. Trócaire, Ireland
88. Uniting Church in Sweden
89. Viva Salud, Belgium
90. Weltfriedensdienst e.V., Germany
91. Women for Peace, Finland
92. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom WILPF Finland
93. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom WILPF Italy
94. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom WILPF Spain