



Over 470* former European Ministers, Ambassadors & Senior Officials call on EU Leaders to act against Israeli annexation of the E1 area of the West Bank

6th May 2026

Call for EU action

The EU and its Member States, together with partners, must take **immediate action to deter Israel** from further advancing its illegal annexation of Palestinian land in the West Bank through the construction of a huge new illegal settlement bloc in the pivotal E1 area. Israel's aim is to bisect the West Bank in two and wreck any prospects of a "two state solution". To this end the Israeli government intends to publish on 1st June an initial tender for construction in the E1 area of 3401 residential "units" to provide housing for up to 15,000 illegal settlers. This E1 tender is proceeding despite persistent efforts by the EU and like-minded countries over many years to engage Israel in a critical dialogue to prevent it from illegally acquiring Palestinian land by force.

The EU and its Member States **must act now** - including at the Foreign Affairs Council of 11th May - to oppose, together with partners, Israeli illegal settlement actions notably those in the E1 area. As an initial response, the EU must - at a minimum - impose targeted sanctions, including visa bans and prohibitions on doing business in the EU on all those engaged in illegal settlement activity, in particular those promoting, tendering for and implementing the E1 Plan. These entities and individuals include politicians, settler leaders, the Israeli 'Land Authority', representatives of local authorities, planners, lawyers, architects, engineers, developers, contractors, banks and other financing institutions.

There is no longer room for hesitation and ambiguity.

The E1 red line is about to be crossed. We must act collectively, individually and, above all, act now.

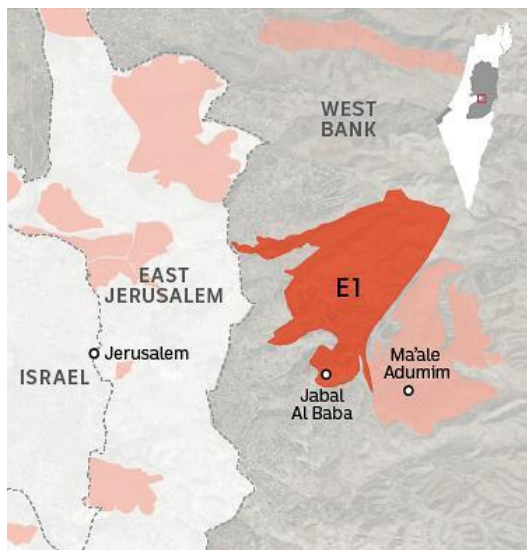
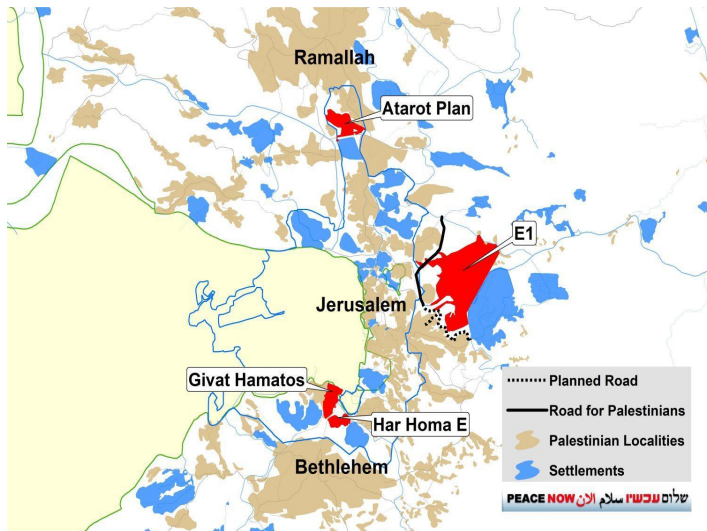


Background:

On 1st June, in just three weeks' time, the Israeli Government intends to publish detailed tenders to develop the pivotal E1 area of the West Bank (see maps below) by constructing an initial phase of 3401 new housing "units", providing homes in a first stage for up to 15,000 illegal Israeli settlers on 17% of the E1 land area, to be followed by subsequent building phases on the remaining 83% of E1. Interested developers and contractors for this first phase would have until 6th July to file their bids, with construction contracts being awarded thereafter. This E1 annexation plan is the culmination of Israeli government actions already underway, cutting the West Bank in two, destroying the territorial contiguity of Palestine, separating East Jerusalem from Ramallah and Bethlehem and - **most important of all** - ruining the prospects of a 'Two-State Solution' and a viable Palestinian State recognised by the overwhelming majority of UN Member States. Israeli plans for both the construction of an adjacent commercial and employment zone within the E1 area and for ethnically cleansing Bedouin communities from the E1 area are also being finalised.

The International Court of Justice declared in 2024 that Israel's occupation of Palestine is illegal and must be terminated. European leaders have repeatedly condemned the E1 plans and urged Israel as the occupying power to cease and desist from taking them forward. All these admonitions have not only been ignored but have been met with a systematic increase in new settlements. Also ignored consistently are innumerable demands by the EU, its Member States and like-minded countries for Israel to put a stop to the tsunami of state supported settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to cease house demolitions, forced transfers, confiscations, evictions, ethnic cleansing and the construction of new outposts and illegal settlements. More than 1000 Palestinians in the West Bank have been killed by terrorist settlers and Israeli security forces since 7 October 2023, whilst killings in Gaza and Lebanon continue unabated.

ANNEX: Illustrative maps of E1 area



(Sources for maps: The Economist / Peace Now)

Note: This Statement has been preceded by seven others that this group has issued since July 2025 (accessed via hyperlinks below) to recommend a series of actions that the EU and its Member States should take to respond to the ongoing situation throughout Palestine, including the continuing impasse in Gaza and the large-scale illegal annexation and expansion of settlements in the West Bank.

*** Statement of 6th May 2026 signed by 476 European former Ministers, Ambassadors & Senior Officials.**

Link to: [List of Co-Signatories](#) *(further signatories may be added after the release of this Statement)*

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