



Over 400* European former Ministers, Ambassadors and Senior Officials call for suspension of the EU - Israel Association Agreement amid Israel's systematic violations of Palestinians' human rights

15 April 2026

No respite for Palestine: With world attention focused elsewhere, Israel, under the cloak of illegal military operations against Iran and Lebanon, has pursued the subjugation of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, by **doubling down on its illegal occupation policy**. More than 73,000 Palestinians have been killed since 7 October 2023, including 700 in the last six months since the so-called “ceasefire” in Gaza. The annexation of Palestinian land by IDF-protected settler terrorists continues apace, with more land grabs planned. This includes the pivotal E1 corridor which bisects the West Bank where issuance of Israeli government tenders for 3400 buildings is imminent. Israel continues to act with **total impunity, undermining the two-state solution and a future Palestinian state whose existence is recognised by 157 UN Member States**. This pattern of illegal conduct is replicated in Israel's indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks on **Lebanon**, which have led to the loss of over 2000 lives as well as widespread displacement and destruction.

Meanwhile, beleaguered Palestinian residents of Gaza are deprived of adequate humanitarian assistance due to ongoing access restrictions, with UNRWA and INGOs impeded from providing urgently needed supplies and services in accordance with their operating mandates. At the same time the highly controversial US-led ‘Board of Peace’ plan for Gaza is floundering and failing even to curb Israeli military attacks on Palestinians in Gaza. If all this was not bad enough, Israel has recently passed legislation providing for the death penalty for Palestinians it indicts for terrorism-related crimes, with Jewish Israelis de jure exempted. This abhorrent legislation is redolent of an apartheid state acting without legal restraints.

Respect for international law is paramount: Our EU Treaties stipulate that EU action in the international arena shall be guided by the promotion of democracy, rule of law, universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity and the principles of the UN and international law. The current Israeli government violates these core EU principles with respect to Palestinians for whose welfare it remains legally and morally responsible as the occupying power. Most importantly, this conduct constitutes a violation of Article 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement which stipulates that “**relations between the parties.... shall be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles**”. This provision is an essential element of the Association Agreement and respect of it is incumbent on both parties.

EU Action is long overdue: The EU's failure in both July and September 2025 to enact even a modest package of measures against Israel's conduct in Gaza - **currently being litigated as possible genocide in the International Court of Justice** - is perceived internationally as the practice of **double standards** by the EU. Partners have observed that while Russia is rightly sanctioned no action is taken in response to Israeli government actions in Palestine and beyond. Meanwhile, Palestinians remain under sustained assault by an Israeli government determined to marginalise them and render their lives intolerable, the ultimate goal being **to force them out** from their lands. It is not acceptable that while Palestinians' human rights and international law are being systematically violated the EU remains divided on the sidelines without exerting the influence it should. Consequently, **we call on leaders of the EU-27 and EU Institutions to:** (i) **initiate measures suspending the EU-Israel Association Agreement in whole or in part;** (ii) **ban trade with illegal settlements;** (iii) **halt trade in military goods with Israel;** (iv) **suspend Israel's engagement in EU programmes;** (v) **expand the list of sanctioned individuals and visa bans to all those implicated in the repression of Palestinians and violations of international law;** and (vi) **establish a set of human rights benchmarks** against which to monitor Israel's future conduct. Non-compliance with these benchmarks should lead to the imposition of additional EU sanctions on the Israeli government.

EU & Member States' former Ministers, Ambassadors & Senior Officials

At a time of turmoil in the Middle East and amid Israel's widespread violations of international law it is imperative for the EU to act and hold Israel to account. This action should be a cornerstone of the new EU strategy for the region anchored in the Union's core values.

* Statement co-signed by **411** European former Ministers, Ambassadors and Senior Officials.

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

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