

March 12th 2025

Israel ignores EU's core Human Rights requests

After the EU Israel Association Council meeting of February 24, Israel's violations of international law continue, exposing a breach of EU's own values and its obligations under international law.

Only days after the EU held the EU-Israel Association Council meeting in Brussels on February 24, the Israeli government showed its complete disrespect for the EU's core human rights law and humanitarian rights law requests made to Israel that day. The EU's conclusions requested "Israel to adhere strictly to the rules and principles of IHL and IHRL" but just a week later, Israel has enforced a [complete blocking of humanitarian aid into Gaza](#) to [use starvation of civilians as a weapon](#), which is considered by the International Criminal Court (ICC) as war crime and crime against humanity, for which the ICC has issued arrest warrants against Israel's Prime Minister and former Minister of Defence.

Today, we, the undersigned human rights and civil society organisations consider the outcome of the EU-Israel Association Council on 24 February 2025 as a complete failure, showing the EU's appalling low voice, akin to complicity in Israel's gross violations of international law and human rights.

[By a letter](#) dated February 10³, we had warned the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Kaja Kallas and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen that this Association Council should not be convened except to address very seriously article 2 of the Association Agreement and envisage very concretely the suspension of the Agreement.

[The European Union's position](#) for the Association Council's 13th meeting⁴ expresses above all the European Union's support for Israel. By convening such a "business as usual" meeting, the EU failed to comply with ICJ rulings and to uphold its commitment to international humanitarian and human rights law, during a historic moment where these laws are being violated by Israel at an unprecedented level.

The EU's failure comes at a moment of greatest threat by the US President administration and by Israel against the very principles of International Law, against UN institutions such as UNRWA, and against the International Criminal Court (ICC). We recall the "plausible risk" of genocide stated by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) more than one year ago, equally confirmed by more than 200 NGOs worldwide and very numerous UN experts, since the beginning of Israel's attack on Gaza.

The ICJ Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024 establishes the illegality of the continuous occupation of the Palestinian territories by Israel and denounces the systematic discrimination of the Palestinian population by Israel; the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) of September 18 has decided strong actions to put an end to Israel's occupation within one year.

While Israel's Prime Minister and former defence minister are under arrest warrants by the International Criminal Court (ICC), citing allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity, the EU has officially invited and received Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Saar for

a de facto “business as usual” talk at the occasion of the EU-Israel Association Council. The EU’s conduct undermines the EU’s credibility as an institution [“committed to promote and protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law both within the EU and worldwide”](#)⁵.

On Monday 3 March UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk rang the alarm and accused Israel of new crimes in the West Bank, “using military weapons and tactics, including tanks and airstrikes, against Palestinians; the destruction and emptying of refugee camps; the expansion of illegal settlements; the severe restrictions on movement; and the displacement of tens of thousands of people. Israel’s unilateral actions and threats of annexation in the West Bank, in violation of international law, must stop.”

Until today, the EU has not addressed seriously the ICJ rulings and advisory opinion, the UNGA resolution and the actual situation on the ground. This is a clear path to the EU’s complicity in the Israeli war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Failure to act further encourages [Israel’s criminal conduct, unlawful policies and apartheid](#)⁶, and contributes to more violence against Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank and in Israel, massively fuelling regional instability and undermining the EU’s commitment and legal obligation to uphold international law.

The EU’s common position contains many concerns and appeals to Israel (respect international law, ensure the protection of civilians, implement the Gaza ceasefire agreement, ...). If Israel doesn’t comply with its obligations recalled by these concerns and appeals within one month - showing that the dialogue in the Association Council has been ineffective - the EU should start to apply consequences according to Article 79 of the Association Agreement.

Considering the unprecedented scale of the crimes committed by the State of Israel and the current threats to international law and UN institutions, suspension of the Association Agreement appears to be the minimum. We call on the European institutions and member states to take fully their responsibilities and to engage in the corresponding procedures.

Signatories:

Pax Christi International,

Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO),

EuroMed Rights,

ActionAid International,

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH),

CNCD 11.11.11,

Portuguese Movement for the Rights of Palestinian People and for Peace in the Middle East (MPPM),

European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine,

European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine (ECCP),

Ekō,

Gibanje za pravice Palestincev,