

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. CIDSE- International family of Catholic Social Justice Organisations
6. Caritas Europa
7. Ekō
8. EuroMed Rights
9. Global Witness
10. Human Rights Watch
11. International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
12. Oxfam
13. Pax Christi International
14. SOLIDAR
15. United Against Inhumanity
16. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)

### *Member state-based:*

17. 11.11.11, Belgium
18. Action des Chrétiens pour l'Abolition de la Torture, Luxembourg
19. ActionAid Denmark
20. Adala for All, France
21. Ambasada Rog, Slovenia
22. Avocats Sans Frontières, Belgium
23. Belgian Academics and Artists for Palestine (BA4P/BACBI), Belgium
24. Broederlijk Delen, Belgium
25. Centro Pace ecologia e diritti umani, Italia
26. CGIL, Italy
27. Christian Aid Ireland
28. CISS, Cooperazione Internazionale Sud Sud, Italy
29. CNCD, Belgium
30. Comhlamh Justice for Palestine, Ireland
31. COPE - Cooperazione Paesi Emergenti, Italia
32. COSPE, Italy
33. Danes je nov dan, Inštitut za druga vprašanja, Slovenia
34. Dignity- Danish Institute against Torture, Denmark
35. Een Ander Joods Geluid, The Netherlands
36. Entraide et Fraternité, Belgium
37. European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine, Belgium
38. European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine, Belgium
39. FGTB-ABVV, Belgium

40. Gaza Group GCDG, Belgium
41. Glosa, Slovenia
42. International Committee Against House Demolitions - Germany
43. Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Ireland
44. Jews For Palestine Ireland
45. Junts Associació Catalana de Jueus i Palestins, Spain
46. Kairos Ireland
47. Law4Palestine, UK and Sweden
48. Nederlands Palestina Komitee, The Netherlands
49. Olof Palme International Center, Sweden
50. PAX, the Netherlands
51. Peace Institute, Slovenia
52. Platform of French NGOs for Palestine, France
53. Portuguese Platform of Development NGOs, Portugal
54. Pro Peace, Germany
55. Reka Si, Slovenia
56. Sadaka-The Ireland Palestine Alliance, Ireland
57. Slovene Philanthropy, Slovenia
58. Solsoc, Belgium
59. The Rights Forum, The Netherlands
60. Trócaire, Ireland
61. Viva Salud, Belgium
62. Women for Peace, Finland
63. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom WILPF Finland
64. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom WILPF Italy
65. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom WILPF Spain