

Open Letter by 58 former European Union ambassadors calling for immediate and effective measures against Israel's unlawful actions in Gaza and the West Bank :

To the Presidents of the European Council, the European Commission, and the European Parliament, and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union

To the Heads of Government and Foreign Ministers of the EU Member States

July 2025

We, 58 former ambassadors of the European Union, were appalled and outraged by the slaughter of innocent Israelis and hostage taking on 7 October 2023 by Hamas and others. No cause can justify such acts, and we condemn them outright.

Today, however, we are witnessing the horrifying spectacle of Israel carrying out, on a daily basis, atrocity crimes against the Palestinian people - above all in Gaza, but also in the occupied West Bank, amounting to a systematic campaign of brutalization, dehumanization, and displacement.

The European Union and nearly all of its Member States have failed to respond meaningfully to these horrific events.

As former ambassadors of the EU we dedicated our professional lives to upholding and promoting core European values and international law, building the reputation of the European Union and defending the interests of its peoples. Those interests and that reputation are now in serious jeopardy as a consequence of EU inaction.

For over 21 months, the Netanyahu government has pursued a relentless campaign of violence and destruction in Gaza. About ten percent of Gaza's entire population, including tens of thousands of children, have been killed, maimed and seriously injured by the IDF's indiscriminate bombardments. Most of Gaza has been reduced to rubble. Those who survive bombs and bullets face hunger, malnutrition, disease, and a collapsed health system deliberately targeted by Israel.

The ongoing siege is starving the population by blocking supplies of humanitarian aid from UN agencies and international NGOs. Replacing UNRWA and other established international providers of aid to Gaza by a politicised and militarised aid operation run by mercenaries is a violation of the UN's humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence which all UN Member States - including Israel - must respect in their entirety.

The concrete humanitarian measures reportedly agreed under the deal the EU High Representative Kallas secured with Israel have not been made public, nor has the arrangement ever been confirmed by the Israeli authorities. To the contrary, since Ms Kallas' announcement of 14 July, hundreds of men, children and women have been killed by Israeli soldiers while desperately seeking food and water for their families. This includes an alarming number of

civilian deaths caused by IDF shooting at Zikim, one of the key border crossing points, that we understand formed part of the humanitarian EU agreement with Israel.

Now, with appalling predictability, Israeli leaders are forcing swathes of Gaza's population into concentration zones - militarized enclosures designed to confine civilians under intolerable conditions, with the clear aim of pressuring them into "voluntary" displacement. This, along with other illegal Israeli policies in the West Bank, constitutes de facto forcible population transfer, a serious war crime under international law. The Israeli ministers of defense, finance and security have all openly called for the permanent removal of Palestinians from Gaza, and a senior "migration administration" has been created to facilitate it. These are calculated steps towards ethnic cleansing.

Meanwhile, in the West Bank, violent Israeli settlers, with full military protection by the IDF, have waged a campaign of terror against Palestinian communities. Homes are torched, inhabitants are murdered, families expelled, water sources poisoned, herding animals stolen, olive groves destroyed, and land annexed in violation of international law. The perpetrators who act with impunity are armed and encouraged by state officials. These settlers are not rogue actors - they are the frontline agents of a government-driven agenda to annex and ethnically cleanse Palestinian land.

The evidence of Israeli malfeasance and its flagrant violation of all known humanitarian and human rights laws is overwhelming. The United Nations, humanitarian organizations, and independent observers - including Israeli and Jewish voices - have documented these crimes in detail. The International Court of Justice has determined that there is a plausible risk of genocide in Gaza and that Israel's prolonged occupation of Palestine is not only unlawful but even constitutes the crime of segregation or apartheid. European public opinion and the majority of young people, including in countries like Germany and Italy, are clearly in favour of their governments acting to stop this horror.

We welcome the recent condemnation of Israel's actions in Gaza and the West Bank by 28 Foreign Ministers, including 20 EU Member States, but words are not enough. We call urgently on all EU leaders and governments, especially those who prevented the Foreign Affairs Council, 15 July, from acting against Israel's egregious humanitarian and human rights violations, to take all necessary and feasible measures under international, European, and national law to bring these atrocities to an end. Action should comprise the following:

1. Resume international aid deliveries immediately at scale and flood the Gaza strip with humanitarian supplies, in full respect of the core principles of international humanitarian law.
2. Suspend with immediate effect all arms and dual use exports to Israel.
3. Ban trade with Israel's illegal settlements in occupied Palestinian territory and prohibit EU and member states' commercial and investment relations with any entity or company doing business in or benefiting from Israel's illegal settlements.

4. Suspend all preferential commercial arrangements for Israel under the Association Agreement.
5. Cancel Israel's participation in Horizon Europe and all dual use research, academic and technology programmes of the EU.
6. Impose targeted sanctions on Israeli Ministers, government officials, military commanders, and violent settlers responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity, facilitating genocide and carrying out State-sanctioned terrorism.
7. Support international and national judicial mechanisms - including the International Criminal Court and domestic courts under universal jurisdiction - to bring perpetrators to justice.
8. Provide political, legal, and financial support to Palestinian civilian victims, human rights defenders, and humanitarian organizations operating under impossible conditions.
9. Recognize Palestinian statehood on the occasion of the UN conference in New York of 28/29 July, to create the necessary prerequisite for a two-state solution.

On 17 July, the Day of International Criminal Justice, the European External Action Service recalled that in regard to crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocides... "history has too many moments when silence followed horror..."

The world will remember how the EU and its member states respond to this catastrophic tragedy. Silence and neutrality in the face of genocide constitutes complicity. Inaction emboldens perpetrators and betrays every principle the Union and its member states claim to uphold.

While continuing to call unceasingly for the return of the hostages, a permanent ceasefire and the end to the war, the European Union, long a champion of human rights and the rule of law, must act now in the name of international law, humanity, and justice for the Palestinian people - or risk forfeiting its credibility, influence and moral standing in the world.

Signed (58):

Mikael Barfod

David Macrae

Geoffrey Barrett

Androulla Kaminara

Alexander Baum

John Kjaer

Thierry Bechet

Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff

Kenny Bell

Michael Laidler

Aad Biesebroek

Eneko Landaburu

Jean-Claude Boidin

Jeremy Lester

Giorgio Bonacci
Laurens Jan Brinkhorst
Jean-François Cautain
Peter Beck Christiansen
Tim Clarke
Philippe Darmuzey
Carlo De Filippi
Aldo Dell' Ariccia
Dominique Dellicour
Michael Doyle
Seán Doyle
Giacomo Durazzo
Michael Emerson
Manfredo Fanti
Karen Fogg
Erwan Fouéré
Marc Franco
David Geer
Gerardus Gielen
William Hanna
Geert Heikens
Gilles Hervio
Andrew Jacobs
Rupert Joy

Christian Manahl
Brian McDonald
Hugues Mingarelli
James Moran
Francesca Mosca
Luigi Narbone
Amir Naqvi
Attilio Pacifici
Elisabeth Pape
Marc Pierini
Corrado Pampaloni
Rensje Teerink
Daniela Tramacere
Philippe Van Damme
Wiepke Van Der Goot
Marcel van Opstal
Alan Waddams
Claudia Wiedey
Marc F. Wolff
Richard Wright