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More than 200 civil society organisations demand the suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement

Wednesday 20 March 2024, by [Over 200 civil society organisations](#) (Date first published: 12 March 2024).

Paris, 12 March 2024. Respect for human rights is an essential element of the EU's association agreements with partner countries. Article 2 states that "relations between the Parties, as well as all the provisions of the Agreement itself, shall be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles, which guides their internal and international policy and constitutes an essential element of this Agreement". Violation of the so-called "essential elements" clauses allows the EU to denounce or suspend the agreements in whole or in part under Article 60 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. In the light of the deaths and suffering endured by the Palestinian people, the European Union has the duty and the means to act to prevent Israel's crimes in Gaza and to reduce the extent of human suffering.



Photo : CCFD-Terre Solidaire

Read the Open Letter below, adressed to:

President Ursula von der Leyen, Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis, European Commission Mr Charles Michel, President of the European Council Ms Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament Prime Minister Alexander De Croo, Presidency of the Council of the European Union Mr Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Dear Madams/Sirs,

The undersigned organisations call on the EU to suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement in light of the violation of human rights by the State of Israel. These human rights violations constitute a violation of the "essential elements" clauses which state that the Agreement is conditional upon the parties' respect for human rights and democratic principles. We unequivocally condemn all violations of international law, in particular the killing of civilians and call on the relevant authorities to investigate them without delay .

Israel's current war on Gaza is causing massive civilian casualties, extensive destruction of civilian infrastructure and the displacement of the overwhelming majority of the population in Gaza. The health system in Gaza has collapsed, hospitals have been bombed and destroyed, health staff killed. The population of Gaza is at imminent risk of famine and death by contagious disease. This is the result of the bombardment of Gaza and blockage by Israel of food, water, fuel, medicines, humanitarian aid and disruption of the sewage system. These are clear, well-documented violations of the human rights of Palestinians.

Over 200 civil society organisations are calling on European Union (EU) decision-makers to suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement without delay, in light of the human rights violations committed by the State of Israel.

Human rights abuses by the Israel government did not start in 2023, however. The United Nations Human Rights Council has concluded that prior to this period grave human rights abuses have been committed. The establishment and expansion of illegal settlements in the West Bank is among these human rights violations, leading to, among others, the expropriation of private land owned by Palestinians, racial segregation due to the forced eviction of Palestinians and the demolition of their property, a climate of impunity for perpetrators of settler violence and the involvement of Israeli security forces in such violence, and restrictions of freedom of movement for Palestinians. The European Council expressed its concerns over the blockade of the Gaza strip (prior to October 2023) and called on military operations to be proportionate, in line with international humanitarian law and for Israel to ease restrictions in the Gaza strip.

The EU considers respect for human rights to constitute an essential element of EU association agreements with partner countries. The provisions of the EU-Israel Association Agreement states that the parties establish the association “considering the importance which the Parties attach...[] to the principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly the observance of human rights and democracy, which form the very basis of the Association;”... and Article 2 states that “relations between the Parties, as well as all the provisions of the Agreement itself, shall be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles, which guides their internal and international policy and constitutes an essential element of this Agreement.”

The violation of the so-called “essential elements” clauses enables the EU to terminate or suspend fully or partially the agreements, in accordance with Article 60 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. Article 82 of the Association Agreement provides that “Each of the Parties may denounce the Agreement by notifying the other Party.”

In spite of the above mentioned, and other well-documented violations of human rights and democratic principles by the State of Israel, its economy continues to enjoy privileged access to the EU market through the EU-Israel Association Agreement. Trade between the EU and Israel has increased substantially since the signing of the agreement in 2000. The EU is Israel's biggest trade partner, accounting for 28.8% of its trade in goods in 2022.

According to EU official policy outlined in the ‘Common Approach on the use of political clauses’,

agreed by Coreper in 2009, "serious breaches of the essential elements clauses may trigger the suspension in whole or part of the overall framework agreement and all the linked agreements, including the trade agreement (non-execution clause)." There can be no denying that Israel's treatment of Palestinians constitutes at the very least, a serious breach of the human rights clauses in the EU-Israel Association Agreement. It would appear that any political and human rights dialogue that the EU has held with Israel has not been effective in preventing these violations, war crimes and other crimes against humanity.

On the 26th of January 2024, the International Court of Justice ruled that at least some of the accusations by South Africa that Israel is committing genocide are plausible. The judges established that it is appropriate to investigate the evidence presented, accept the charges and dismissed Israel's call to reject the trial. The court ordered Israel to take measures to prevent a possible genocide in progress that include allowing more humanitarian aid into Gaza and acting against those who issue genocidal statements. Though the final verdict is yet unknown, the fact that the ICJ considered South Africa's claims as 'plausible' and has issued provisional measures against Israel should raise serious alarm bells in the EU. Regardless of the final ruling of the ICJ, the provisional ruling has direct implications for third party states to the Genocide Convention, to employ all lawful means at their disposal to induce Israel to refrain from acts in breach of the Genocide Convention, including the withholding, reduction, or suspension of any and all forms of assistance, or the suspension or review of trade negotiations and agreements."

What is currently happening in Gaza is the consequence of a political and moral failure of the international community. Suspension of the Association Agreement over the violation of the Agreement's human rights clauses would send a strong message that the EU's commitment to human rights is more than just rhetoric.

We urge you to suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement without delay.

Sincerely,

See the signatories

International

ActionAid International CADTM International - Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt
Fédération internationale pour les droits humains GRAIN Oxfam

Europe

Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) ECCP - European Coordination of Committees and
Associations for Palestine
Ekō European Coordination of La Via Campesina European Trade Union Network for Justice in
Palestine

Germany

BIP-jetzt e.V. Deutsch-Palästinensische Gesellschaft e.V.
Flüchtlingskinder im Libanon e.V. Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions Germany
Jewish-Palestinian Dialogue Group Munich Palestine Solidarity Committee Stuttgart

Austria :

Attac Autriche

Belgium

Belgian Academics and Artists for Palestine (BA4P)

Broederlijk Delen

CADTM Belgique CNCD-11.11.11 De-Colonizer

Entraide & Fraternité Grupo belga Solidair met Guatemala Intal MOC (Mouvement Ouvrier Chrétien) Solsoc SOUTIEN BELGE OVERSEAS Viva Salud Eurochild

Spain

Aliança per l'emergència climàtica València (País Valencià)

Alternativa Antimilitarista MOC AMAL - Asociación Madrileña de Ateos y Librepensadores

Amigos de la Tierra

Arrels - Associació Cultural i Medi Ambiental

Asamblea Antibelicista de Teruel Asamblea Antimilitarista Madrid Asamblea Ciudadana Gana Guadix

Asamblea Plaza de los Pueblos Madrid Asdecoba Asociación Actúa por un Mundo Sostenible

Asociación Canaria de Juristas por la Paz y los Derechos Humanos - JUPADEHU

Asociación Comunidad Palestina en Canarias

Asociación Cultural "La Moravilla" Asociación de Amistad con el Pueblo Saharaui de Sevilla

Asociación de Juristas Afroeuropeos - Ajae

Asociación de la Comunidad Hispano-Palestina "Jerusalén"

Asociación Democracia y Salud Asociación Feministas San Blas Canillejas Asociación Iniciativa

Cambio Personal, Justicia Global Asociación Internacional de Juristas por Sáhara Occidental -

IAJUWS

Asociación Madrileña de Enfermería Gerontológica - AMEG

Asociación Madrileña de Salud Pública (AMaSaP)

Asociación para la Defensa de la Sanidad Pública de Madrid

Asociación para la Defensa de las Pensiones Públicas de Canarias

Asociación Pueblos Vivos Cuenca Asociación Sapiencia Asociación Taller Educación en Valores

Alternativos (CALA)

Asociación Uyamaa

Asamblea 15M Sarrià-Sant Gervasi (Catalonia)

ATTAC España Avance Solidario Bicicletos Viajes

Bienvenidxs Refugiadxs Huesca Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Canarias Centro Social

Tiritanas Comunal CGT - Confederación General del Trabajo Col.lectiu Agudells (Catalonia)

Colectivo "Antifascistas Elsa Wolff" Colectivo "Pasaje Seguro Cantabria" Colectivo Noviolencia

Comando Violeta - Colectivo Feminista de Cuenca Comisiones Obreras (CCOO) Comité de

Solidaridad con la Causa Árabe Comité de Solidaridad con los Pueblos - Interpueblos Cantabria

Comité Oscar Romero Comunidad Hispano Palestina en Sevilla Comunidad Santo Tomás de Aquino

Confederación Intersindical Confederación Intersindical Galega (CIG) (Galicia) Coordinadora Estatal

por la Defensa del Sistema Público de Pensiones - Córdoba

Cristianos de Base Dones x Dones Ecologistas en Acción [ELA](#) (Basque Country)

Entrepueblos/Entrepobles/Entrepobos/Herriarte Feministas Usera Fridays for Future Spain

Fundación Aequitas Fundación Atabal Grupo Cristiano de Reflexión-Acción Grupo de Noviolencia

Elaia Grupo de Reflexión y Formación Cristiana de Gerena (Sevilla) Huesca con Palestina Iniciativas

de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo - ICID Intersindical de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores

de Aragón (ISTA) Intersindical Solidària (País Valencià) La Comuna - Asociación de presos y

represaliados por la dictadura franquista

LAB sindikatua (Basque Country) Llegat Jaume Botey i Vallès (Catalonia) Lurgatz Talde Feminista

(Basque Country) Madrid Solidaria con Palestina Madrileños por el Derecho a Decidir Médicos del

Mundo Movimiento No Violencia Naturaca Novact

Observatori DESC (Catalonia) Organización Nacional para el Diálogo y la Participación - ONDA
Plataforma "Alicante por la Paz" Plataforma Aturem la Guerra (Catalonia) Plataforma ciudadana
"Stop Mare Mortum" Plataforma Ciudadana de Córdoba por la Defensa del Sistema Público de Pensiones
Plataforma Córdoba con Palestina Plataforma de Sanitari@s con Palestina Plataforma de Tenerife con Palestina Red de Solidaridad Popular de Jinámar Reds - Red de solidaridad para la transformación social (Catalonia) Respeto Animal Murcia Revista Alandar Revista La Mar de Onuba Revuelta Mujeres en la Iglesia Rubí Solidari (Catalonia) Rumbo a Gaza Saharacciones Tenerife (Canarian Islands) SETEM Catalunya (Catalonia) Sindicato de Administración Pública de CGT Alicante Sindicato de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores de la Administración de Castilla y León - STACYL Sociedad Española de Profesorado y Plataforma de Filosofía (SEPFi) SUDS - Associació Internacional de Solidaritat i Cooperació (Catalonia) Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Yayoflautas de Córdoba ZAMBRA Zehar-Errefuxiatuekin (Basque Country)

Finlande

Friends of the Earth Finland

France

ActionAid France AITEC Amis de la Terre France Amis de Sabeel France Association des Universitaires pour le Respect du Droit International en Palestine (AURDIP)
Association France Palestine Solidarité (AFPS) Attac BDS France CADTM France CCFD-Terre Solidaire CGT CJACP Collectif Stop Mercosur
Confédération paysanne Culture de Palestine Fédération Artisans du Monde Fédération internationale pour les droits humains
Foodwatch France
Ligue des droits de l'Homme MRAP (Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les peuples)
Nature et Solidarité Pax Christi France Plateforme des ONG françaises pour la Palestine Solidaires UDMF UJFP La Cimade Syndicat de l'éducation nationale SNES

Greece

Naturefriends Greece
Greek Affiliate of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)

Irlande

Afri (Action from Ireland) Centre for Global Education Christian Aid Ireland Comhlamh Trade Justice Cork Palestine Solidarity Campaign Financial Justice Ireland
Fracking Free Clare Friends of the Earth Ireland Ireland Palestine Mental Health Network Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign Irish Congress of Trade Unions Irish Council for Civil Liberties Not Here Not Anywhere Sadaka - The Ireland Palestine Alliance
Síolta Chroí STAND & Suas Educational Development

Northern Ireland

Unison NI
Italie
NWRG

Luxemburg

Comité pour une Paix Juste au Proche-Orient

The Netherlands

Handel Anders! coalitie

MiGreat Overijssel voor Palestina

PAX

Rotterdam Palestina Coalitie

SOMO

Stichting Groningen-Jabalya Transnational Institute (TNI)

Poland

Polish Zero Waste Association

Portugal

Panteras Rosa - Frente de Combate à LesBiGayTransfobia

TROCA - Plataforma por um Comércio Internacional Justo

P.S.

• CADTM. 19 March 2024:

<https://www.cadtm.org/More-than-200-civil-society-organisations-demand-the-suspension-of-the-EU>