



The EU must take immediate action to hold Israel to account for its brutal oppression against Palestinians

Brussels, March 14th 2021

For the attention of:

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President – Joseph Borell,

President of the European Council – Charles Michel

Dear Mr Borell,

Dear Mr Michel,

On behalf of the European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine (ETUN), a coalition of 35 European trade union organisations, representing over six million workers, I am writing to express our deep concern about recent events in occupied East Jerusalem and Gaza and urge you to take immediate and concrete actions to ensure that the Israeli government complies with international law.

In recent weeks we have seen a rapid escalation of tensions in East Jerusalem, including the planned eviction of Palestinian families from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood and police brutality towards those protesting to support them, increasing restrictions on Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, and the shocking scenes at the al-Aqsa Mosque during the holy month of Ramadan.

In the past days, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, 113 Palestinians had been killed, including 27 children, and more than 580 others wounded as a result of Israeli government attacks on Gaza. A further seven people in Israel have been killed by rockets from Gaza. Protests against these recent events and the Israeli government's ongoing policies of annexation, forced displacement and ethnic cleansing have also been met with brutal repression by security forces.

ETUN condemns the violence and deeply regrets the tragic loss of Palestinian and Israeli lives.

This intensification of violent repression is within a context of increased colonization and appropriation of Palestinian land, amounting to de facto Annexation. In recent years we have seen a significant expansion of illegal settlements and the destruction of Palestinian homes and properties, including many funded by the EU and member states.

Human Rights Watch said in a report on April 27¹ : *'The oppression of Palestinians has reached a threshold and a permanence that meets the definitions of the crimes of apartheid and persecution.'* It has already forwarded these findings to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

We are deeply concerned that beyond statements calling for de-escalation, the EU and international community have done almost nothing to challenge the Israeli government's violations of international law and Palestinian rights. In face of this increased repression, violence and risk of what the UN describes as a 'full scale war', the EU, as Israel's biggest trading partner, must move from words to action and ensure accountability for these crimes.

We urge you to take immediate action and ensure that the EU uses all the tools at its disposal to protect lives and hold the Israeli government to account for its ongoing brutal violations of international law including:

- ➔ implement an immediate ban on trade with illegal Israeli settlements and end all European relations with companies with financial and economic activities in the illegal settlements;
- ➔ immediately suspend EU-Israel Association Agreement until the Israeli government complies with its human rights clauses;
- ➔ suspend the arms trade with Israel and support calls for a UN arms embargo,
- ➔ fully support ICC investigation into the Israeli government's crimes against Palestinians;
- ➔ develop a European list of countermeasures against annexation;
- ➔ exclude Israel from participation in European framework programs like Horizon Europe and Erasmus +,

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent matter.

Yours sincerely,

Koen Vanbrabantt

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Chair

**European Trade Union Network for Justice for Palestine
Steering Committee**

Member organisations:

La Centrale Générale-FGTB – Belgium

ACV/CSC Brussels – Belgium

ACV/CSC – Belgium

IRW-CGSP – Belgium

¹<https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimesapartheid-and-persecution>

LBC-NVK – Belgium
CNE – Belgium
ACOD Culture – Belgium
Union syndicale Solidaires – France
CGT France – 66 – France
Confederacion Intersindical Galega – CIG – Galicia, Spain
ELA – Basque Workers Solidarity – Basque Country, Spain
LAB – Basque Country, Spain
STEILAS – Education Union – Basque Country, Spain
Intersindical Valenciana – Valencia, Spain
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Spain The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) - Ireland
FORSA - Ireland Unite the Union - Ireland
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Irish National Teachers' Organisation– INTO: Derry City, INTO: Newry, INTO:
Dungannon, INTO: Armagh, INTO: Belfast West, Belfast&District Trades Union
Council, Derry Trades Union Council - Ireland
Trade Union Friends of Palestine - Ireland
Fagforbundet (Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees) - Norway
Fagforbundet Bergen - Norway
The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) – region Trondheim - Norway
The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) – region Sandefjord - Norway
The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) – region Bergen og Omland
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