Ms Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission
Mr Valdis Dombrovskis, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission
Mr Charles Michel, President of the European Council
Ms Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament
Mr Alexander De Croo, Prime Minister of Belgium, 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.

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 Council of the EU expressed its concerns over the blockade of the

2 CCPR/C/ISR/CO/5, par. 15, 24, 36 and 42
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 2022.4

According to EU official policy outlined in the ‘Common Approach on the use of political clauses’, agreed by Coreper in 2009,5 “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 influence 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,

International

ActionAid International
CADTM International
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
Fédération internationale pour les droits humains
GRAIN
Oxfam

National

Academics for Palestine
ActionAid France

Ireland
France

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6 ICJ/192, paragraph 54
7 ICJ/192, paragraph 86
ActionAid Ireland
Afri (Action from Ireland)
AITEC
Aliança per l’emergència climàtica València
AMAL – Asociación Madrileña de Ateos y Librepensadores
Amigos de la Tierra
Amis de la Terre France
Amis de Sabeel France
Arrels – Associació Cultural i Medi Ambiental
Asamblea Antibelicista de Teruel
Asamblea Ciudadana Gana Guadix
Asamblea Plaza de los Pueblos Madrid
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 Internacional de Juristas por Sáhara Occidental - IAJUWS
Asociación Madrileña de Enfermería Gerontológica - AMEG
Asociación Madrileña de Salud Pública (AMaSaP)
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
Asociación Iniciativa Cambio Personal, Justicia Global
Asociación para la Defensa de la Sanidad Pública de Madrid
Assemblea 15M Sarrià-Sant Gervasi
Association des Universitaires pour le Respect du Droit International en Palestine (AURDIP®)
Association France Palestine Solidarité (AFPS)
Attac
Attac Austria
ATTAC España
AURDIP
Avance Solidario
BDS France
Belgian Academics and Artists for Palestine (BA4P)
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Bienvenídxs Refugiadxs Huesca
BIP-jetzt e.V.
Bisan Center for Research and Development
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Friends of the Earth Finland Finland
Friends of the Earth Ireland Ireland
Fundación Aequitas Spain
Fundacion Atabal Spain
Gaza Action Ireland Spain
Greek Affiliate of IPPNW Greece
Grupo belga Solidair met Guatemala Belgium
Grupo Cristiano de Reflexión-Acción Spain
Grupo de Noviolencia Elaia Spain
Grupo de Reflexión y Formación Cristiana de Gerena (Sevilla) Spain
Handel Anders! coalitie Netherlands
Huesca con Palestina Spain
Iniciativas de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo - ICID Spain
Intal Belgium
Intersindical Solidària Spain - País Valencià
Ireland Palestine Mental Health Network Ireland
Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign Ireland
Irish Congress of Trade Unions Ireland
Irish Council for Civil Liberties Ireland
Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions Germany Germany
Jewish-Palestinian Dialogue Group Munich Germany
La Cimade France
La Comuna - Asociación de presos y represaliados por la dictadura franquista Spain
LAB sindikatua Spain - Basque
Ligue des droits de l'Homme France
Llegat Jaume Botey i Vallès Spain - Catalonia Spain - Basque
Lurgatz Talde Feminista Country
Madrileños por el Derecho a Decidir Spain
Médicos del Mundo Spain
MiGreat Netherlands
MOC (Mouvement Ouvrier Chrétien) Belgium
Movimiento No Violencia Spain
MRAP (Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l’Amitié entre les peuples) France
Naturaca Spain
Nature et Solidarité France
Naturefriends Greece Greece
Not Here Not Anywhere Ireland
Novact Spain
NWRG Italy
Observatori DESC Spain - Catalonia
Organización Nacional para el Diálogo y la Participación - ONDA Spain
Overijssel voor Palestina Netherlands
Oxfam Ireland Ireland
Palestine Solidarity Committee Stuttgart  
Panteras Rosa - Frente de Combate à LesBiGayTransfobia  
PAX  
Pax Christi France  
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Plataforma Aturem la Guerra  
Plataforma ciudadana "Stop Mare Mortum"  
Plataforma Ciudadana de Còrdoba por la Defensa del Sistema Público de Pensiones  
Plataforma Córdoba con Palestina  
Plataforma de Tenerife con Palestina  
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Reds - Red de solidaridad para la transformación social  
Respeto Animal Murcia  
Revista Alandar  
Revuelta Mujeres en la Iglesia  
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Rubí Solidari  
Rumbo a Gaza  
Sadaka - The Ireland Palestine Alliance  
Saharacciones Tenerife  
SETEM Catalunya  
Sindicato de Administración Pública de CGT Alicante  
Sindicato de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores de la Administración de Castilla y León - STACYL  
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Solsoc  
SOMO  
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TROCA - Plataforma por um Comércio Internacional Justo  
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