



Time for effective EU Diplomacy and Action on Palestine / Israel

STATEMENT by over 400 former EU & Member State Ministers, Ambassadors and Senior Officials

2nd February 2026

At a time when the international order is facing unprecedented challenges, the EU and its Member States must fully engage with all relevant parties to bring peace to Israel-Palestine in accordance with longstanding UN principles, resolutions and international law. This engagement must run in parallel to the roll out on 22 January in Davos of President Trump's "Board of Peace", a concept which, based on the mandate given to it by UNSCR 2803, purports to launch and operationalise the second phase of [a Comprehensive Plan](#) to bring peace in Gaza, between Israel and Palestine following the catastrophic chain of events unleashed by the deadly Hamas attacks of 7 October 2023. While the representativeness, governance, legal status and planned global remit of the Board, and its subordinate bodies, raise **fundamental concerns**, the immediate focus of the EU and the international community should be on reversing the **current harsh realities on the ground in Gaza, as well as in East Jerusalem and the West Bank** where the security situation continues to deteriorate. If these pressing issues are not urgently addressed the Plan's aspirations to promote security, the disarmament of Hamas and other armed groups, effective civilian administration, reconstruction and development and long-term peace will be thwarted. The following disquieting developments make evident the need for the EU and its Member States to take robust and prompt diplomatic action:

- During the first "ceasefire" phase of the Plan targeted military activity by Israel has continued unrelentingly, leading to the deaths in Gaza of around 500 Palestinians, including more than 100 children. This brings the total number of deaths there since the start of military operations to nearly 71,700, the vast majority of whom were civilians; these killings should cease immediately.
- Continuing restrictions prevent the full and unhindered provision of humanitarian aid, including shelter and other winterisation support, to destitute and impoverished Palestinians in Gaza. It is imperative that these restrictions are lifted and that the entry of humanitarian supplies is not impeded by a restrictive 'dual-use' policy applied by Israel. In this context the Rafah border crossing must be **fully** opened for goods and passenger traffic in both directions, unhindered and on a permanent basis with EUBAM Rafah playing an important facilitating role.
- Israel's deregistration of some 37 INGOs supplying urgently needed assistance to Gaza is the consequence of requiring them to operate in ways at variance with UN humanitarian principles. Israel's obstructionist policy should cease immediately and INGOs and other aid Agencies allowed to continue their lifesaving work without hindrance, not least to prevent the loss of even more children's lives from hypothermia. Under no circumstances should there be a return to the failed policy of providing aid through misguided operators, such as the 'Gaza Humanitarian Foundation' (GHF), which has had deadly consequences for thousands of Palestinians.

- The unceasing campaign by Israel to denigrate UNRWA and to erase the identity of Palestinian refugees by obstructing the Agency's operations in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is in flagrant contempt of the [ICJ Advisory Opinion of 22 October 2025](#). This reached its apotheosis on 20 January with the physical destruction of UNRWA's West Bank Field Office at Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem - with the Israeli Minister of National Security in attendance. Destroying UNRWA's footprint in Gaza, another Israeli goal, threatens the education and wellbeing of hundreds of thousands of children who have already lost over two years of schooling. As many European countries and Canada have demanded, Israel should terminate its destructive campaign against UNRWA, the only Agency capable of delivering services to Palestinians at scale.
- In 2025 Israel advanced plans for over 47,000 housing "units" (in some cases a so-called unit may be an entire apartment block) in the West Bank, an 81% increase over 2024, in flagrant contempt of another [ICJ Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024](#) which underlined Israel's obligation to cease all settlement activities, evacuate settlers and end their unlawful presence. The issuance by the Israeli authorities of building tenders for 3400 "units" in December 2025 in the E1 parcel of land between East Jerusalem and the West Bank is clearly designed to destroy the geographical contiguity of the West Bank, prevent the creation of a Palestinian state and undermine the two-state solution. These illegal activities should cease forthwith as should the escalating actions of violent vigilante settlers, protected by the IDF, who have terrorised Palestinian villages and their occupants in the OPT.
- Israel continues to withhold Palestinian tax clearance revenues and block correspondent banking services between Israel and Palestine, undermining the proper functioning of the Palestinian Authority and impeding Palestinian enterprises from getting access to much needed finance. These measures should be reversed without delay.
- Nearly 28 months on from October 7th international media are still banned from operating in Gaza; this edict is unacceptable and should be revoked.
- Hundreds of journalists, doctors and other medical personnel, teachers and aid workers have lost their lives in Gaza, in many cases targeted intentionally. This should cease forthwith.
- The fate of over 9,000 Palestinian detainees held in Israeli prisons, including minors and many held without charge, needs to be urgently addressed.

The events described above require action. The European Union and its Member States, adherents to [the New York Declaration](#) adopted in September 2025 by 142 UN Member States and referenced in [UN Security Council Resolution 2803](#), have consistently condemned actions inimical to peace. However, such condemnatory statements have not been backed up by concrete measures. On the threshold of new efforts to promote peace the EU should act firmly against all those pursuing annexationist agendas aimed at threatening Palestinians' inalienable rights of self-determination and undermining the two-state solution. Furthermore, there must be accountability and no impunity for those **from both sides** who have committed acts in violation of international law.

At this critical moment **we call upon the EU and its Member States to:**

- **Desist from membership of the "Board of Peace"** which, in its current guise, includes an ICC indicted war criminal (with a second one invited) and whose Charter and governance threaten to undermine, **if not in reality to supplant**, the role of the UN in safeguarding peace and security.

- **Launch immediately a critical, time limited, dialogue with Israel** on the application of the relevant provisions of the EU-Israel Association Agreement. In the absence of constructive responses and actions on these concerns, adopt measures aimed at stopping Israeli excesses and unremitting violations of international law, including suspending the Agreement. In line with applicable ICJ rulings and opinions, all military support to Israel should be halted and trade with its illegal settlements **effectively** banned.
- Reach out proactively to like-minded and strategic partners in the OECD, the Middle East, the Global South and other G20 members to establish common positions and develop initiatives to promote peace.

A robust approach based on the EU's founding values and principles will be essential to reestablish the Union's reputation as a force for peace and good in our time.

Statement co-signed on 2nd February 2026 by 404 former EU and Member State Ministers, Ambassadors and Senior Officials.

Link to the [List of co-signatories](#)

Link to a [Compilation of measures advocated by this group in previous Statements](#)

Earlier Statements were issued by this group in: [July](#), [August](#), [September](#) and [October](#) 2025