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*To the attn. of:*

**Ms Kaja Kallas**

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President European Commission

**Ministers of Foreign Affairs of European Union (EU) member states**

14 July 2025

Dear High Representative,  
Dear Ministers of Foreign Affairs,

## **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL URGES THE EU TO ENSURE THAT PROMISES OF HUMANITARIAN AID DO NOT LEAD TO INACTION ON EU-ISRAEL ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT**

We are writing to you ahead of the 15 July meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council, to urge you to suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement and use all tools at your disposal to bring an end to Israel's violations of international law against Palestinians and ensure that the EU and its member states do not contribute to these grave violations.

On 10 July, High Representative Kallas announced that the EU and Israel had agreed on "significant steps" to improve the humanitarian situation in the occupied Gaza Strip.<sup>1</sup> This agreement comes amid an ongoing genocide perpetrated by Israel against Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip, as part of which Israel has been using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. It also follows over a month of Israeli forces routinely opening fire on civilians seeking food, either near the two militarized distribution centres run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, or while waiting for humanitarian convoys. Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed while seeking food and thousands have been injured.<sup>2</sup> As Israel commits to these steps, the EU must ensure that the agreed measures put an immediate end to the militarization of aid. This practice violates international law, does not adhere to humanitarian principles and deepens harm. Furthermore, cooperating with militarized aid schemes could risk EU complicity in serious crimes under international law. And while any measures to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians are welcome, easing restrictions and expanding access can never be a substitute for an immediate and unconditional lifting of the blockade. Any new aid mechanism must guarantee unhindered, safe and dignified provision of life-saving supplies throughout the occupied Gaza Strip, and must be led by the UN, inclusive of UNRWA, Palestinian civil society, and the wider humanitarian community.

This agreement comes only days after Israel's Defense Minister Israel Katz proposed plans to concentrate all Gaza's population in a so-called "humanitarian city" to be built on the ruins of Rafah, and preventing them from leaving it.<sup>3</sup> Any plans for "relocation" of Palestinians inside Gaza or deportation outside Gaza against their will would amount to the war crime of unlawful transfer or deportation. When committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack on the civilian population, it would also constitute a crime against humanity.

The agreement also comes days after state-backed settler violence in the occupied West Bank forcibly displaced 120 Palestinians from the Melihat Bedouin community, over half of them children, from al-Mu'arajat East, near Jericho.

<sup>1</sup> EEAS, "Israel/Palestine: Statement by the High Representative/Vice President Kaja Kallas", 10 July 2025, [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelpalestine-statement-high-representativevice-president-kaja-kallas\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelpalestine-statement-high-representativevice-president-kaja-kallas_en)

<sup>2</sup> Amnesty International, "Gaza: Evidence points to Israel's continued use of starvation to inflict genocide against Palestinians", 3 July 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/07/gaza-evidence-points-to-israels-continued-use-of-starvation-to-inflict-genocide-against-palestinians/>

<sup>3</sup> Haaretz, "Defense Minister Says Israel Plans to Concentrate All Gaza's Population in 'Humanitarian' Zone Built on Rafah's Ruins", 7 July 2025, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-07-07/ty-article/.premium/defense-minister-israel-to-concentrate-all-gaza-population-in-rafah-humanitarian-zone/00000197-e56a-d1ad-ab97-e5ef764e0000>

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), this is the ninth community to be fully displaced in the Ramallah-Jericho area (central Jordan Valley) since the beginning of 2023.<sup>4</sup>

The EU review, which found that Israel is in clear breach of its human rights obligations under Article 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement, included among the violations committed by Israel its “blockade and restrictions on humanitarian aid”, in addition to numerous other violations.<sup>5</sup> In Gaza, these include the unprecedented level of killing and injury of civilians, indiscriminate attacks, attacks on hospitals “in apparent systematic fashion” and killings and arbitrary detention of medical staff, as well as attacks against journalists. In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the review points to settlement consolidation and expansion, to state and settler violence, and to mass arrests and arbitrary detention.<sup>6</sup> These violations will undoubtedly continue even if Israel fulfils its agreement to take partial measures to ease the humanitarian catastrophe it has deliberately created and exacerbated in Gaza over the past 21 months – a year and a half after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) had issued its first of three binding orders that Israel ensure unhindered provision of aid.<sup>7</sup>

The agreement promising entry of aid into Gaza must not be an excuse for inaction. Under the EU-Israel Association Agreement, “respect for human rights” forms “an essential element” of cooperation – it is abundantly clear that Israel is in breach of its obligations, and the Agreement must be immediately suspended. The EU and its member states have an obligation under the Genocide Convention to take all reasonably available measures to bring an end to Israel’s genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. They must also abide by their obligation to not contribute to it, or to Israel’s other grave violations of international law, including the crime against humanity of apartheid. As confirmed by the ICJ’s Advisory Opinion of July 2024, states are also “under an obligation not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel’s illegal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.”

At the Foreign Affairs Council on 23 June, the EU and its member states chose to delay meaningful action. Since that day, hundreds of Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip have been killed through relentless bombardment of homes, shelters for internally displaced people, public places or through direct attacks on civilians seeking aid. State-backed settler attacks and mass forced displacement have continued in the occupied West Bank.<sup>8</sup>

The Foreign Affairs Council on 15 July must not be yet another missed opportunity. Any further delay will be counted in deaths and displacement and will undoubtedly be interpreted by Israel as a greenlight to continue its genocide against Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip, its system of apartheid against all Palestinians whose rights it controls, and its unlawful occupation of the whole Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT).<sup>9</sup>

Amnesty International therefore calls on the EU and its member states to use the upcoming Foreign Affairs Council to:

- **Suspend in full or in part the EU-Israel Association Agreement**, on the basis of Israel’s clear violation of Article 2 of the Association Agreement and member states’ obligations to use all tools at their disposal to prevent genocide and pressure Israeli authorities to bring their actions in line with international law.
- In the case of partial suspension, member states should use all means at their disposal to pressure Israel to end its genocide and other violations of international law in Gaza and the OPT, including by suspending in particular:

<sup>4</sup> UN OCHA, “Humanitarian Situation Update #303 | West Bank”, 9 July 2025, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-303-west-bank#main-content>

<sup>5</sup> EEAS, “Foreign Affairs Council: remarks by High Representative Kaja Kallas at the press conference”, 23 June 2025, [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/foreign-affairs-council-remarks-high-representative-kaja-kallas-press-conference-0\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/foreign-affairs-council-remarks-high-representative-kaja-kallas-press-conference-0_en)

<sup>6</sup> EU Observer, “Full text of EU report on Israeli crimes in Gaza”, 20 June 2025, <https://euobserver.com/eu-and-the-world/ar0246a0da>

<sup>7</sup> Amnesty International, “Israel must comply with key ICJ ruling ordering it do all in its power to prevent genocide against Palestinians in Gaza”, 26 January 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/01/israel-must-comply-with-key-icj-ruling-ordering-it-do-all-in-its-power-to-prevent-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza/>

<sup>8</sup> Amnesty International, “Israel’s destructive West Bank military operation fuels mass forced displacement of Palestinians”, 5 June 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/06/israels-destructive-west-bank-military-operation-fuels-mass-forced-displacement-of-palestinians/>

<sup>9</sup> Amnesty International, “EU/Israel: Anything short of suspending the EU-Israel association agreement a ‘greenlight to Israel’s genocide’”, 9 July 2025, <https://www.amnesty.eu/news/eu-israel-anything-short-of-suspending-eu-israel-association-agreement-greenlight-to-israels-genocide/>

- The **trade pillar** of the Association Agreement: Representing the most effective step the EU can take, as Israel's largest trading partner (€42.6 billion trade in goods in 2024, €25.6 billion in services in 2023<sup>10</sup>).
- Israel's **preferential access to Erasmus+ and Horizon academic exchange programs**: The preferential treatment and access to grants afforded to Israel under the Association Agreement amount to over €1.11 billion under the EU's Horizon Europe fund between 2021 and 2024<sup>11</sup> and at least a further €40 million under Erasmus between 2015-2020.<sup>12</sup>
- **Impose a comprehensive arms embargo on Israel**: This should include all arms or equipment or technology or parts that allow Israel to carry out the genocide in Gaza, and maintain its unlawful occupation and system of apartheid, including policing and surveillance equipment used in the OPT.
- **Take steps to prevent trade or investment relations that aid or assist in the maintenance of the illegal situation created by Israel in the OPT** and contribute to the commission of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law: This must include a total ban on all imports and exports of goods and services from and to Israel's illegal settlements in the OPT as well as investments therein.
- **End the exemptions for visa-free travel to the EU for Israeli settlers**: By granting visa-free access to the EU to Israel citizens living in settlements in the OPT, but requiring visas for Palestinians living in the OPT, the EU and its member states are contributing to Israel's system of apartheid against Palestinians.<sup>13</sup> Providing visa-free access to settlers also violates the obligation not to recognize as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of Israel in the OPT, as per the ICJ Advisory Opinion of July 2024,<sup>14</sup> and the EU's own differentiation policy.
- **Impose targeted sanctions against Israeli officials** most implicated in crimes under international law.

In addition, Amnesty International calls on the EU and its member states to:

- **Ensure that the agreement on humanitarian aid concluded with Israel allows for immediate, unfettered, safe, and dignified access to humanitarian aid throughout the occupied Gaza Strip**: Aid should be provided through the restoration of a unified, UN-led coordination mechanism, grounded in international humanitarian law and principles of humanitarian action, and inclusive of UNRWA, Palestinian civil society, and the wider humanitarian community.
- **Strongly and publicly condemn any plans to "relocate" Palestinians inside or outside of Gaza against their will, which would amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity**: Refrain from lending any support to the unlawful transfer or deportation of Palestinians, which would place states at risk of complicity in Israel's crimes under international law.
- **Support the work of the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, the UN Commission of Inquiry, UN Special Rapporteurs and bodies and reject all attempts to delegitimize these independent bodies and impede their crucial work for accountability for Israel's violations of international law**: The EU and its member states should strongly **condemn the United States' sanctions issued against the UN Special Rapporteur on the OPT, Francesca Albanese**, and exert diplomatic pressure on the US government to reverse them. The EU and its member states must do everything in their power to mitigate and block the effect of the sanctions on UNSR Albanese and on the ICC and its staff, including by **activating the EU blocking statute** and adopting similar instruments at national and regional level, that aim to shield European operators from the effects of extraterritorial sanctions.

<sup>10</sup> European Commission, Trade and Economic Security – Israel, [https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/israel\\_en](https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/israel_en)

<sup>11</sup> Israel Innovation Authority, "Israeli Researchers and Companies Secure Over €1.1 Billion in Horizon Europe Grants, Cementing Global Leadership in Innovation", 19 March 2025, [https://innovationisrael.org.il/en/press\\_release/1-1-billion-to-israel-from-horizon-europe-in-2021-24/](https://innovationisrael.org.il/en/press_release/1-1-billion-to-israel-from-horizon-europe-in-2021-24/)

<sup>12</sup> The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, "Erasmus+", <https://international.huji.ac.il/erasmus>

<sup>13</sup> Amnesty International, "Israel's apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel system of domination and crime against humanity", 1 February 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/> ; Amnesty International, "EU/IPT: Letter to EU member states on implications of the ICJ Advisory Opinion", 28 August 2024, <https://www.amnesty.eu/news/eu-iop-letter-to-eu-member-states-on-implications-of-the-icj-advisory-opinion/>

<sup>14</sup> International Court of Justice, "Advisory Opinion: Legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem", 19 July 2024, <https://www.icj-cij.org/index.php/node/204160>

Should the EU once again fail to act as a bloc on 15 July to suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement, member states must urgently take unilateral or concerted steps to bring their actions in line with international law, which takes precedence over both EU and national law, including by conducting themselves as if the agreement was suspended, and unilaterally suspending all forms of cooperation with Israel that may contribute to its grave violations of international law.

Please find in annex to this letter Amnesty International's input provided to the review of Israel's compliance with its human rights obligations under the EU-Israel Association Agreement, which compiles our investigations of violations of international law by Israeli authorities.

We stand ready to meet you to discuss our urgent concerns detailed above or provide further information.

Sincerely,



Eve Geddie  
Director  
Amnesty International – European Institutions Office