

Brussels, 2 April 2024

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

Prime ministers of all EU member states,

Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre

Prime minister of Norway,

Dear Madam/Sirs,

We, the undersigned European trade unions, are calling on the EU and European countries to suspend the Association Agreement with Israel as well as bilateral treaties in light of grave violations of human rights by the Israeli Government, in violation of Article 2 of the EU - Israel Association Agreement.

The conflict in Gaza and the severe additional restrictions imposed by the Israeli government in the West Bank have had a devastating impact on Palestinian workers and those they support. The ILO reported in December that 66 per cent of employment in Gaza and 32 percent of employment in the West Bank has been lost since 7 October.

On Friday, January 26 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) found it plausible that Israel's acts could amount to genocide against 2.3 million Palestinians in the occupied and

besieged Gaza Strip. The ICJ also issued six provisional measures, ordering Israel to prevent genocidal acts in Gaza.

At the time of the ICJ ruling, several European countries decided to suspend their funding to UNRWA, following accusations that have not been proven yet, further complicating the provision of humanitarian aid to the population of Gaza. We ask for this aid to be restored, to avoid more deaths due to the lack of assistance resources for the civilian population.

Since the judges made their ruling, the situation has further deteriorated. **Over 27,000 Palestinians are dead, 1.7 million people are displaced, 93 percent are facing crisis levels of hunger. The devastation is undeniable.** ICJ ruling has broader implications for all States – as all are obligated both to refrain from committing genocide, and to prevent and punish it wherever it occurs. **We remind all state parties to the Convention that they have legal obligations to ensure implementation of the ‘provisional measures’, to prevent genocide and to ensure that they are not complicit in genocide.**

In February 2023 Ireland and Spain called for an "urgent review" of the EU-Israel Association Agreement — and for action if Israel is found to have breached its "respect for human rights and democratic principles" obligations that "forms the very basis of the association".

The maiming and killing of tens of thousands of civilians, deliberate starvation of the population, and destruction of all means of life do indeed suggest that Israel may not be strictly following human rights and democratic norms in Gaza.

The EU is Israel's largest trading partner, with trade amounting to more than €46 billion in 2023. Trade is governed by the EU Israel Association Agreement, which includes an ‘essential elements’ human rights clause. “This means that either side can unilaterally suspend the agreement in response to serious violations of human rights.

Israel is also a participant in Horizon Europe, where Israeli institutions can apply for funding under this €95 billion research and innovation scheme. Access to this lucrative programme should also be immediately suspended until Israel guarantees compliance with its obligations under international law.

On February 23 a group of UN experts issued an urgent call to immediately stop the export of arms to Israel. In addition, on 12 February 2024 the Dutch appeals court ordered the Netherlands to halt the export of F-35 fighter jet parts to Israel. The court found that there was a “clear risk” that the parts would be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian law, as “there are many indications that Israel has violated the humanitarian law of war in a not insignificant number of cases”.

We support those statements and call on the EU and European countries to **impose military embargo and stop weapon transfer** via their countries as called for by Palestinian trade unions.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent matter.

Yours sincerely,

European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine

Co-signed by

ACV-CSC (Belgium)

Pancyprian Federation of Labour PEO (Cyprus)

Union Syndicale Solidaires (France)

Irish Congress of Trade Unions (Ireland)

La Centrale Générale-FGTB (Belgium)

Métallos-FGTB (Belgium)

CNE-CSC (Belgium)

ACV Puls (Belgium)

CGSP-ALR Bruxelles / ACOD-LRB Brussel (Belgium)

CGT-FNSCBA (France)

CGT-FDSP (France)

Fédération Syndicale Unitaire (France)

Fórsa (Ireland)

Communication Workers Union (Ireland)

Irish National Teachers Organisation (Ireland)

Teachers' Union of Ireland (Ireland)

Mandate Trade Union (Ireland)

UNISON (N.Ireland)

NIPSA (N.Ireland)

Fagforbundet (Norway)

Industri Energi (Norway)

CGT - Confederación General del Trabajo (Spain)

ELA (Basque Country)

Solidaritat Obrera (Catalunya)

IAC-Intersindical alternativa de Catalunya (Catalunya)

Confederación Intersindical Galega (CIG) (Galicia)

Intersindical Valenciana (Valencian Country)

SAT-PDI-US (Spain)

Craigavon Trades Council (Ireland)

Dundee Trades Union Council (Scotland)

Cork Council of Trade Unions (Ireland)

NUJ Dundee Branch (Scotland)

Unite Retired Members Branch Dundee (Scotland/UK)

Dublin Council of Trade Unions (Ireland)

Federation CGT des Services Publics (France)

CGT FDSP (France)

Syndicat CGT retraités de Morsang sur Orge UCR CGT (France)

Comité des syndicats CGT ville de Paris (France)

CGT Territoriaux Strasbourg Eurométropole (France)

CGT Territoriaux de Saint-Nazaire (France)

Coordination Syndicale Départementale CGT des Services Publics de Seine Maritime (France)

Section retraités service public ville de Tarbes et TLP (France)

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