

To:

Madame Ursula von der Leyen,
President of the European Commission

H.E. Josep Borrell
High-Representative/Vice President

Brussels / Strasbourg, 16. September 2024

Dear President von der Leyen,
Dear High Representative Borrell,

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, write to you as the hostilities in Israel and Palestine continue to rage. Since October 7th, more than 41,000 Palestinians have been killed, and Gaza largely reduced to rubble. The infrastructure in Gaza has been decimated, with 75% of buildings destroyed, including all hospitals, which are now non-functional. The people of Gaza are starving and have endured nine months without access to electricity, clean water and functioning sewerage systems. The deliberate targeting of hospitals and public infrastructure constitutes a clear violation of international humanitarian law and provide further evidence of Israel's war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide.

While the EU has swiftly and rightly denounced and acted upon Palestinian armed groups' war crimes, as well as adopted targeted restrictive measures against some extremist settlers and their organisations in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, regrettably, the EU has yet to collectively acknowledge, denounce, and adopt appropriate measures to address the Israeli authorities' war crimes and other international humanitarian law (IHL) violations. In the absence of any accountability for such crimes, we witness this systemic violence against the Palestinian people now spreading unabated to the West Bank, under the leadership of extremist ministers.

We therefore wish to support your efforts and proposal in extending the sanctions list to those responsible for some of these war crimes and gross human rights violations.

The current Israeli government, and in particular ministers Smotrich and Ben Gvir represent a clear and determined barrier to peace, and should be held to account for their role in inciting war crimes, genocidal acts, as well as providing material and financial support to the illegal settlements and Israel settlers.

The European Union must act against individuals in the Israeli leadership whose actions continue to inflame hatred and violence, and undermine stability in the region, without any consequences either internally or externally. The EU has means within its toolbox to help tip the balance away from the extremists, and back in favour of those demanding a negotiated political solution.

As such, we welcome the multiple statements that you have made in relation to this matter, notably your statement on the 29th June condemning Mr Smotrich's announcement of five new illegal settlements and your statement on the 24th March, condemning yet another announcement by Minister Smotrich, which stood in clear violation of international law. Again, we welcome several responses from your office relating to the equally appalling comments by Minister Ben Gvir, including calling for the mass forcible transfer of Gaza's population and building a synagogue at the Al-Aqsa compound. However, it is clear that statements alone are insufficient when compared to the gravity of the two Ministers' actions and words.

We are therefore writing to express the need for immediate restrictive measures against Ministers Smotrich and Ben Gvir, including the freezing of assets, and a prohibition on the provision of funds or economic resources to them or their Ministries, directly or indirectly. Additionally, they should be subject to travel bans across the European Union.

Furthermore, we believe it is important to recall the recently adopted ICJ advisory opinion, where the Court takes the view that Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) is unlawful, and that the State of Israel is under an obligation to bring to an end its unlawful presence in the OPT as rapidly as possible, including by ceasing immediately all new settlement activities.

Moreover, the Court also reminds that all States and international organisations that the presence of the State of Israel in the OPT is unlawful and that there is obligation to not render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created.

We therefore take the view, that entities, agencies or institutions which are responsible for the illegal expansion of colonies (settlements) in the West Bank or render aid or assist in maintaining the situation created, should also be appropriately sanctioned, and we wish to support your efforts in that regard as well.

It is our collective and moral duty to act and to speak out.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

1. *Matjaž NEMEC (S&D, Slovenia)*
2. *Tineke STRIK (Greens/EFA, Netherlands)*
3. *Barry ANDREWS (Renew, Ireland)*
4. *Aodhán Ó RÍORDÁIN (S&D, Ireland)*
5. *Evin INCIR (S&D, Sweden)*
6. *Merja KYLLÖNEN (The Left, Finland)*
7. *Leoluca ORLANDO (Greens/EFA, Italy)*
8. *Abir AL-SAHLANI (Renew, Sweden)*
9. *Daniel ATTARD (S&D, Malta)*
10. *Brando BENIFEI (S&D, Italy)*

11. Alex AGIUS SALIBA (S&D, Malta)
12. Kathleen FUNCHION (The Left, Ireland)
13. Lynn BOYLAN (The Left, Ireland)
14. Vladimir PREBILIČ (Greens/EFA, Slovenia)
15. Thomas BAJADA (S&D, Malta)
16. David CORMAND (Greens/EFA, France)
17. Ana MIRANDA PAZ (Greens/EFA, Spain)
18. Rima HASSAN (The Left, France)
19. Mounir SATOURI (Greens/EFA, France)
20. MéliSSa CAMARA (Greens/EFA, France)
21. Majdouline SBAI (Greens/EFA, France)
22. Thijs REUTEN (S&D, Netherlands)
23. Saskia BRICMONT (Greens/EFA, Belgium)
24. Domenico LUCANO (The Left, Italy)
25. Irena JOVEVA (Renew, Slovenia)
26. Per CLAUSSEN (The Left, Denmark)
27. Estrella GALÁN (The Left, Spain)
28. Marit MAIJ (S&D, Netherlands)
29. Robert BIEDROŃ (S&D, Poland)
30. Vicent MARZÀ IBÁÑEZ (Greens/EFA, Spain)
31. Özlem DEMIREL (The Left, Germany)
32. Billy KELLEHER (Renew, Ireland)
33. Gordan BOSANAC (Greens/EFA, Croatia)
34. Dario TAMBURRANO (The Left, Italy)
35. Ilaria SALIS (The Left, Italy)
36. Carolina MORACE (The Left, Italy)
37. Marta TEMIDO (S&D, Portugal)
38. Valentina PALMISANO (The Left, Italy)
39. Mario FUIRORE (The Left, Italy)
40. Danilo DELLA VALLE (The Left, Italy)
41. Lucia ANNUNZIATA (S&D, Italy)
42. Villy SØVNDAL (Greens/EFA, Denmark)
43. Kira Marie PETER-HANSEN (Greens/EFA, Denmark)
44. Rasmus NORDQVIST (Greens/EFA, Denmark)
45. Giorgio GORI (S&D, Italy)
46. Alessandro ZAN (S&D, Italy)
47. Hanna GEDIN (The Left, Sweden)
48. Jonas SJÖSTEDT (The Left, Sweden)
49. Alessandra MORETTI (S&D, Italy)
50. Ciaran MULLOOLY (Renew, Ireland)
51. Mohammed CHAHIM (S&D, Netherlands)
52. André FRANQUEIRA RODRIGUES (S&D, Portugal)
53. Cecilia STRADA (S&D, Italy)
54. Jussi SARAMO (The Left, Finland)
55. Maria WALSH (EPP, Ireland)
56. Pasquale TRIDICO (The Left, Italy)

57. *Li ANDERSSON (The Left, Finland)*
58. *Catarina VIEIRA (Greens/EFA, Netherlands)*
59. *Carola RACKETE (The Left, Germany)*
60. *Irene GIL MONTERO (The Left, Spain)*
61. *Leila CHAIBI (The Left, France)*
62. *Isabel SERRA SÁNCHEZ (The Left, Spain)*
63. *Anthony SMITH (The Left, France)*
64. *Camilla LAURETI (S&D, Italy)*
65. *Elio DI RUPO (S&D, Belgium)*
66. *Marco TARQUINIO (S&D, Italy)*
67. *Annalisa CORRADO (S&D, Italy)*
68. *Catarina MARTINS (The Left, Portugal)*
69. *Arash SAEIDI (The Left, France)*
70. *Manon AUBRY (The Left, France)*
71. *Emma FOURREAU (The Left, France)*
72. *Estelle CEULEMANS (S&D, Belgium)*
73. *Cristina GUARDA (Greens/EFA, Italy)*
74. *César LUENA (S&D, Spain)*
75. *Kim VAN SPARRENTAK (Greens/EFA, Netherlands)*
76. *Jaume ASENS LLODRÀ (Greens/EFA, Spain)*

ANNEX I - List of incitements by Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and Minister for National Security, Ben Gvir (chronological order)

- Speaking from the Knesset plenum on Wednesday, far-right Religious Zionism MK Bezalel Smotrich said David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, should have "finished the job" and kicked all Arabs out of the country when it was founded. Source: [The Times of Israel](#) - 13/10/2021
- Speaking in Paris on Sunday, Smotrich said there was "no such thing as a Palestinian" because "there is no such thing as the Palestinian people". Source: [AJE](#) - 20/03/2023
- Rejecting the US State Department's condemnation of calls for the resettlement of Palestinians outside of Gaza, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich on Wednesday reiterated his support for encouraging "voluntary emigration" of the Strip's population to other countries as part of his postwar vision. The leader of the far-right Religious Zionism party claimed in a statement that "more than 70 percent of the Israeli public today supports" encouraging emigration as "a humanitarian solution," but did not provide a source for this statistic. Source: [Times of Israel](#) - 03/01/2024
- "What needs to be done in the Gaza Strip is to encourage emigration," he said. "If there are 100,000 or 200,000 Arabs in Gaza and not two million Arabs, the entire discussion on the day after will be totally different," he said. He added that if the 2.3 million population were no longer there "growing up on the aspiration to destroy the state of Israel", Gaza would be seen differently in Israel. "Most of Israeli society will say: 'Why not? It's a nice place, let's make the desert bloom, it doesn't come at anyone's expense'." Source: [AJE](#) - 31/03/2024
- "Rafah, Deir al-Balah, Nuseirat – total destruction. 'Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.' There is no place for them under heaven." Source : [Haaretz](#) - 30/04/2024
- "As soon as an arrest warrant of any kind is issued by the prosecutor of The Hague Tribunal against an Israeli citizen or soldier as part of the case that the PA is handling against Israel, and/or a unilateral decision is made in the General Assembly to recognize a Palestinian state, I will unilaterally and immediately stop the transfer of funds to the Palestinian Authority" [The Times of Israel](#) - 25/04/2024
- "For every country that unilaterally recognises a Palestinian state, we will establish a settlement." Source: [AJE](#) - 28/06/2024

- “We created a separate civilian system,” Mr. Smotrich said. To deflect international scrutiny, the government has allowed the defense ministry to remain involved in the process, he said, so that it seems that the military is still at the heart of West Bank governance. “It will be easier to swallow in the international and legal context,” Mr. Smotrich said. “So that they won’t say that we are doing annexation here.” Source: [NYTimes](#) - 24/06/2024
- National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who has repeatedly ignored the Israeli government’s longstanding ban on Jews praying at the site, told Army Radio on Monday that if it were possible, he would build a synagogue at the Al-Aqsa compound, known to Jews as the Temple Mount. Source: [Al-Jazeera English](#) - 26/08/2024
- The United States rejects recent statements from Israeli Ministers Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben Gvir advocating for the resettlement of Palestinians outside of Gaza. This rhetoric is inflammatory and irresponsible. They should stop immediately. Source: [US State Department](#) - 02/01/2024
- “We cannot have women and children getting close to the border... anyone who gets near must get a bullet [in the head],” Ben-Gvir said during a debate with Israeli military chief Herzl Halevi on the army’s “open-fire” rules at the cabinet meeting on Sunday. Source: [The New Arab](#) - 13/02/2024