

FIDH  
17, passage de la Main d'Or  
75011 Paris  
France

**Attn. :**

**M. Charles Michel**, President of the European Council,  
**M.M. Permanent Representatives** of the 27 Member States of the European Union,

**M. Josep Borrell Fontelles**, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

**Ms. Ursula von der Leyen**, President of the European Commission,

**Ms. Roberta Metsola**, President of the European Parliament,

**Members of the European Parliament,**

**Re: Open letter : Palestine and Israel situation - FIDH urges the 27 countries of the European Union to intervene in support of international humanitarian law and human rights**

The logo for FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) is displayed in white lowercase letters on a dark purple rectangular background.

Excellencies, dear Madam, dear Sir,

Ahead of the summit of the 27 countries of the European Union to be held on October 17 to define a common position for member states regarding the latest violent events in Palestine and Israel, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) urges the EU leaders to intervene in support of international humanitarian law and human rights, to stop the targeting of civilians and call for an immediate ceasefire and to allow for humanitarian aid to enter Gaza. The European Union has a role to play to uphold international law, to enable peace and ensure accountability.

The systematic, intentional and widespread attacks carried out against the civilian population in Gaza must end, the displacement of over 1 million person in Gaza should be reversed, international law must be protected and EU member states should not give Israel the greenlight for this continuation of the crimes committed in Gaza and the illegal situation in Palestine generally.

Hamas's attacks in Israel, which have led to the killing of 1400 Israelis, including civilians and the taking of hostages are not acceptable and are in violation of international law. Such acts require independent investigation and prosecution but can't be used as a justification for indiscriminate and intentional killing thousands of civilians, wiping entire families from the civil record in Gaza and turning Gaza into rubble. An equal approach to international law and its application must be respected and fulfilled at all times.

Since October 7, Israel has launched a full-scale military offensive against the Gaza Strip, aiming to reduce it to rubble. Public statements by Israeli leaders whether by the Israeli Prime Minister or his Minister of Defense confirm that "the war is not against Hamas, but against the state of Gaza". Israel's October 13 order to evacuate civilians from the northern Gaza Strip constitutes an attempt to forcibly and illegally displace civilians, coupled by cutting off electricity, water and humanitarian aid may reflect genocidal intent or ethnic cleansing.

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Since then, Israeli attacks have killed more than 2750 people and resulted in the injury of more than 9,700, including 1030 children according to the Palestinian ministry of health. Reports have revealed the use of white phosphorus, and the supply of food, water, electricity, fuel and medicine to the Gaza Strip has been completely cut off. The closure and blockade and starvation imposed on the civilian population of Gaza, in addition to the denial of humanitarian access, are clearly prohibited by international humanitarian law and constitute war crimes.

In the West Bank 58 Palestinians were killed by Israeli Occupying Forces and settlers, 1250 were injured. These systematic and widespread policies carried out by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory need serious efforts from the EU to hold perpetrators accountable and end these decades long violations, including by ending trade with Israel's illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory.

This cycle of violence takes place against the backdrop of Israel's illegal occupation and apartheid regime imposed on the Palestinian people, which the international community - including the European Union and its member states - has allowed to continue, despite the appeals and warnings issued by human rights organizations and United Nations mechanisms. The blockade and closure of Gaza has lasted for more than 16 years, and has been compounded by six major military assaults, trapping two million Palestinians in an open-air prison declared "unlivable" by the United Nations. Moreover, Israel has established and maintains a system of apartheid through its laws, policies and practices, while continuing a perpetual denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the right of return.

In a period marked by extreme tensions and radicalized discourse, it is fundamental that the European Union and its member states, as ardent and impartial defenders of international law, call for de-escalation and an immediate ceasefire to protect civilian populations. It is principled from the EU to exert pressure on Israel to open Gaza, allow humanitarian aid in, and once and for all lift blockade; the collective punishment of the entire population in Gaza.

While the European Union, its member states and its leaders have been quick to condemn the Hamas attack, FIDH is disappointed that the initial statements by the Council of the European Union and its leaders remain one-sided and deviate from its demand for respect for international law expressed in other contexts, and does not condemn the ongoing indiscriminate attacks against the civilians in Gaza. The EU should show ethical leadership and refrain from double standards, and put an end to Israel's prevailing impunity.

It is incumbent on the European Union to put an end to its unconditional support for the Israeli government, and to condemn in the strongest terms the problematic statements made by its leaders, unless it would become complicit in the serious violations of international law for which Israel may be responsible.

Furthermore, the EU should do everything possible to obtain an immediate ceasefire by all parties, to take concrete measures to free the civilian hostages and protect the Palestinian people from the indiscriminate Israeli attacks against the civilian population, guarantee the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza, and take serious measures towards achieving a just and lasting solution, one that will take into consideration the 75 years on ongoing violations against the Palestinian people rights.

**FIDH calls on the Council of the European Union, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von Der Leyen, and the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, as well as the leaders of the 27 EU member states, to:**

- Denounce the ongoing Israeli attack on Gaza and the war crimes and violations of international law committed, call for an immediate ceasefire and take concrete measures to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people from Israel's indiscriminate attacks;

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- Demand that Israel respect its obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular by guaranteeing vital supplies of water, gas, fuel, electricity and basic commodities to the Palestinians in Gaza, and that it cease all attacks on civilians and civilian installations;
- Put in place all diplomatic measures to organize the release of hostages held by Palestinian armed groups;
- Exert pressure on Israeli government to stop inciting violence, and arming illegal settlers who are further perpetuating the illegal situation on the ground;
- Address the root causes of this conflict and remedy them through serious measures, in particular by urging Israel to implement UN resolutions to lift the blockade of Gaza and proceed to a total, immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, as well as the realization of the right of return of Palestinian refugees as enshrined in UN General Assembly resolution 194;
- Urge Israel to put an end to the colonization, apartheid and annexation policies imposed on the Palestinian people, which are at the root of the persistent waves of conflict in the territory;
- Call for Israel to allow the entry of the Independent Commission of Inquiry (COI) to investigate and report on the crimes committed in Palestine and Israel including the recent events;
- Unequivocally and unconditionally support the work of the ICC Office of the Prosecutor in its independent investigation of international crimes committed in the Situation of Palestine. European leaders have a duty to hold Israel accountable for its war crimes and violations of international law.

Yours sincerely