

*“Let me reaffirm the EU’s commitment to a just and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli Palestinian conflict through a two-state solution and an agreement that ends the occupation which began in 1967. We reaffirm our readiness to work with both parties and our partners in the region and the international community towards the resumption of meaningful negotiations to resolve all final status issues and to achieve a just and lasting peace.”*

—[Statement](#) by H.E. Mr. Silvio Gonzato,  
Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to the UN  
at the Security Council on 20 August 2019



## WHAT IS THE CONTEXT?

A just resolution to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict is critical for peace in the Middle East and in our world today. Over 71 years of violence and 52 years of military occupation have resulted in widespread violations of human rights of women, men and children. In particular, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) is cause for alarm. On a daily basis, there are breaches of international law related to the Israeli military occupation occurring in both small ways and on a large scale. In Gaza, twelve years of a devastating land, air and sea blockade has brought 2 million people to the brink of inhumane existence.

The EU has the potential to be a crucial player in promoting a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict. However, since the breakdown of the last round of final status negotiations in 2014, there has been a lack of unity among EU member states on how best to move forward in resolving this conflict, in taking common standpoints and jointly upholding human rights and international law. A unanimous EU voice condemning human rights and international law violations has never been more important. This critical stance must include challenging any efforts that conflict with international law and UN Security Council resolutions, including the damaging actions taken unilaterally by the current US administration.

It’s positive that the EU and several member states have continued support of civil society and human rights defenders and have stepped up contributions to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA), especially in response to US budget cuts. It’s important the EU continues its support of UNWRA’s efforts to protect and safeguard the welfare and well-being of the 5.4 million Palestinian refugees under their care.

## WHY MUST THE EU TAKE A STRONGER STANCE?

- The US Middle East peace plan threatens to further undermine respect for human rights and international law considerations in Israel/Palestine. Now is the time for the EU and its member states to lead on Israel/Palestine with a human rights-based approach and reject any plan which does not embrace these basic principles.
- There is a need for strong international leadership to bring both Israelis and the Palestinians back to the negotiating table and begin a dialogue rooted in mutual respect for the humanity and dignity of the other, as well as a commitment to abide by international law.

## YOUTH ADVOCACY PROJECT BY THE ARAB EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE, OUR MEMBER ORGANISATION IN BETHLEHEM

Since 2018, the [Arab Educational Institute \(AEI\)](#) – with funding from the EU and CAFOD – empowers young people in advocating for their civil rights and for a just peace. The project will reach some 300 Palestinian teenagers and 300 young women in the Bethlehem and Hebron regions, including the centre of Hebron which is heavily affected by the presence of Israeli settlements. The youth are trained in choosing advocacy topics, formulating demands, involving stakeholders, approaching decision-makers and developing advocacy actions based on non-violent approaches. The teenagers have been active on topics such as UNWRA's financial cuts, stopping youth emigration, reducing school drop-outs, selling Palestinian products, taking care of agricultural lands and facing problems related to the Wall; while the young women mostly focused on access to medical facilities, school transport, children play fields, garbage collection, challenging corruption, drug use and strengthening women's voices in the media.



## AS A MEP YOU CAN SUPPORT A STRONGER EU COMMITMENT FOR PEACE FOR ISRAEL AND PALESTINE!

As a Member of the European Parliament you can be a catalyst to secure a more peaceful and just Israeli-Palestinian society:

- Ask the EU High Representative and EU Foreign Ministers to insist that any approach to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including the US Peace Plan, be firmly grounded in a human rights-based approach. Towards this end, the EU must strongly reject any plan that does not embrace principles of international law (see this [joint CSO letter](#)).
- Push through parliamentary questions for a pro-active and coherent foreign policy aimed at maintaining a realistic option for conflict settlement based on self-determination and human rights (see our member PAX's [EU context analysis report](#)).
- Request the Council to extend the mandate of the EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process after 2020. This representative performs an essential role in actively engaging with Israeli and Palestinian civil society.
- Support EU international cooperation in safeguarding the freedom and ability of civil society organisations and human rights defenders to fulfill their mandates, despite pressure on certain EU Member States to change this, particularly in the face of delegitimisation campaigns and recent legislation such as the 2014 NGO "Funding Transparency" Law. Nonviolent resistance to occupation and injustice can pave the way for a renewed peace process.
- Call on EU Member States to adhere to [UNSC Resolution 2334](#) that calls for distinguishing between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied in 1967 in all relevant dealings, including the implementation of the [EU decision](#) on the labeling of products from illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, as this has the potential to be a strong incentive for Israel to change its policies.