



*Attn: Mr Josep Borrell, Vice-President of the European Commission and  
High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy*

*Rue de la Loi 200. 1049 Brussels (Belgium)*

June 17th, 2020

Dear VP/HR Mr Borrell,

As Members of the European Parliament, we want to express our deep concern regarding the plans announced by the Israeli Government to formally annex large swathes of the West Bank as of 1st July.

If this threat goes forward, it would be an unprecedented breach of international law, further jeopardizing a peaceful and just solution. This attempt to perpetuate occupation would be the latest blow to the prospect of a viable Palestinian State, with all the implications that this has. The European Union has been one of the main defenders of the two-state solution, in line with UN resolutions, and it is our responsibility to secure it.

You have stated that this move by the Israeli government “cannot pass unchallenged”. We welcome this statement, as neither the European Union nor its Member States should recognise a situation created through the violation of international law. Silence or even acceptance of the situation through Israel’s ‘facts on the ground’ policy would only contribute to perpetuate the occupation. Should Israel proceed with de jure annexation, we urge the deployment of an immediate set of counter-measures: the suspension of the EU-Israel Agreement, the imposition of a comprehensive arms embargo and the exclusion of Israel from EU funding programmes.

However, we believe that the EU should not sit on the sidelines faced by the prospect of annexation. There is an urgent need for effective deterrence steps, chiefly among them the recognition of a Palestinian state and the imposition of a ban from the EU single market of all products from Israel’s illegal settlements. We contend that the latter is not in any way an extraordinary measure but simply the fulfilment of the EU’s own obligation of non-recognition of the illegal situation, as has been signalled by UN Human Rights Council special rapporteur for the Palestinian issue, Michael Lynk, as the only way to avoid the continuous expansion of settlements.

EU policy in the region has failed until now in keeping Israel accountable for its violations of human rights and international law. We believe it is necessary to explore all the different possibilities on the table if Israel acts on its annexation threats, and Member States cannot exclude the possibility of sanctions. Today the European Union is the only international actor that, if united, can promote an actual dialogue to advance towards a peaceful solution, which has the recognition of the State of Palestine as a necessary condition. This may be our last chance. The EU has an enormous responsibility and we expect you to act accordingly.

Best regards,

1. Manu Pineda (GUE/NGL), DPAL Chair
2. Evin Incir (S&D), DPAL Vice-Chair
3. Margrete Auken (Greens/EFA), DPAL Vice-Chair
4. Sira REGO (GUE/NGL)
5. Pierrette HERZBERGER-FOFANA (GREENS/EFA)
6. Malin BJÖRK (GUE/NGL)
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10. Mick WALLACE (GUE/NGL)
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48. Miguel URBAN (GUE/NGL)
49. Chris MACMANUS (GUE/NGL)
50. Maria Eugenia RODRÍGUEZ PALOP (GUE/NGL)
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