

Open Letter to the President of the European Parliament

25 May 2022

Subject: Denial of European Members of Parliament into Palestine by Israel's Apartheid Regime and Your Trip to Israel

Dear President Metsola,

We, the undersigned organisations, strongly denounce Israeli authorities' decision to deny entry to Gaza to a European Parliament delegation, and denial of entry to Palestine all together to the delegation chair, Manu Pineda, MEP, which compelled the entire delegation to cancel their vital trip.¹ The six Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) were on an official mission as part of their mandate in the Delegation for Relations with Palestine, to assess the situation in Palestine, specifically in Gaza, following the killing of Al-Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh by Israeli occupation forces.

The European Parliament delegation was scheduled to meet representatives from the undersigned Palestinian civil society organisations to hear first-hand account about the intensification of the oppression of the Palestinian people taking place on the ground and the essential work Palestinians are doing to confront Israel's entrenched apartheid and its illegal settlement enterprise.

We also strongly decry your decision to pursue your trip to meet with Israeli officials and address Israeli lawmakers, regardless of the above, promoting impunity for a regime perpetuating war crimes and crimes against humanity, all despite the utter disrespect shown to your very own institution.

The denial of entry to the European delegation is a reminder that Israel is operating *de facto* sovereignty over the Palestinian people as a whole, which is in violation of the Palestinian inalienable right to self-determination. This continues a decades-long policy of restricting access to international experts, preventing the monitoring and documentation of international crimes and deter solidarity with the Palestinian people. Israel denied entry to many UN Officials², US Congresspeople³, and deported the Director of Human Right Watch in 2019.

We are all the more concerned given the new Israeli policy that will enter into force on 5 July 2022, which will further tighten the requirements and conditions that foreigners will have to meet in order to enter the West Bank, with a particular adverse effect on the right to family reunification. This will entrench the deliberate fragmentation of the Palestinian people, the control of Palestinian population growth and collection of data on foreign nationals.⁴

¹ The delegation was composed of six members of the European Parliament, including Mr Manu Pineda Chair, Ms Evin Incir 1st Vice-Chair, Ms Salima Yenbou, Mr Grace O'Sullivan, Mr Chris MacManus and Mr João Pimenta Lopes.

² PHROC, "(PHROC) Condemns Israel's Denial of Entry to UN Special Rapporteur, Mr Mihcael Lynk" (2 July 2019) available at: <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/14590.html>

³ PHROC, "(PHROC) Condemn as Unlawful Israel's Denial of Entry to Esteemed US Congresswomen, Rep. Rashida Tlaib and Rep. Ilhan Omar, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory" (19 August 2019), available at: <https://www.alhaq.org/palestinian-human-rights-organizations-council/14847.html>

⁴ Al-Jazeera, "New Israeli rules on foreigners visiting West Bank stir outrage" (27 April 2022), available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/27/new-israeli-rules-on-foreigners-visiting-west-bank-stir-outrage>

Several of our organisations have already been smeared, outlawed, subjected to Pegasus spyware surveillance and some staff administratively detained by the Israeli authorities. The direct aim being to damage our international partnerships and solidarity and further silence us.

By offering to Israeli lawmakers “strengthening the links between EU Parliament and the Knesset, ... improving ties in science, in trade, in education, in art, in research and in technology”, while failing to even mention Shireen Abu Akleh’s assassination, Israel’s illegal occupation, Masafer Yatta’s ongoing mass forced expulsion and systemic human rights violations, you have failed to fulfil your responsibility under international law and make yourself complicit in the institutionalized domination and systematic oppression of the Palestinian people.

By sapping our resources, outlawing our work, and operating constant mass surveillance over all Palestinians, particularly Human Rights Defenders, Israel is actively denying the collective Palestinian right to self-determination, de-developing and disenfranchising the Palestinian people and advancing with total impunity *de facto* and *de jure* annexation of the territory. Your response is only a further encouragement to that.

Therefore, we call on you to:

1. Condemn the unlawful Israeli discriminatory laws, policies and practices denying entry to those invited into and visiting Palestine, as a legislative measure designed to entrench apartheid, noting that persecuting those who call out discriminatory acts of apartheid, is itself an illegal act of apartheid, under the Apartheid Convention;
2. Demand the suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement on the basis of the violation of its article 2, and end Israel’s participation in the programme Horizon Europe and all other cooperation programme benefitting from European Union public funding, until it guarantees compliance with its obligations under international law towards the Palestinian people and upholds human rights of all those under its effective control;
3. Object to the EU’s insertion of gas projects with Israel, in particular the EU-Israel interconnector and the EastMed pipeline, into the list of Projects of Common Interest (PCI). They not only contradict the EU’s green energy goals - they expose the EU’s deep double standards;
4. [Call](#) on the European Commission for Trade to send without delay a proposal to the European Parliament and the EU Commission to ban all trade with illegal settlements in occupied territories;
5. Ensure that all committees, subcommittees and European Parliament representatives systematically consult with Palestinian civil society on matters that concern Palestinians.

The undersigned organisations:

Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association
Al-Haq
Bisan Center for Research and Development
Stop the Wall Campaign
The Jerusalem Human Rights Consortium
The Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy
Union of Agricultural Workers Committee (UAWC)

