

To:

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs

3 June 2019

Re: Europe's human rights policy in the forthcoming US plan for the Middle East

Dear High Representative Federica Mogherini,
Dear EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs,

We are writing as a group of Israeli, Palestinian, European and international non-governmental organisations with serious concern about the forthcoming US Middle East peace plan. The plan threatens to further undermine respect for human rights and international law considerations in Israel/Palestine. This is an opportunity for the European Union, its Member States and those who care about the principles of international law to lead on Israel/Palestine with a human rights-based approach and reject a plan which does not embrace these basic principles.

Ahead of the US plan, the EU must insist on a human rights-based approach as the basic benchmark for its acceptance and engagement. This leadership requires proactively laying down the EU's standards in support of the Palestinian right to self-determination and equal rights for all people in Israel/Palestine – thereby firmly rejecting any attempt to deny these rights.

The EU has based its stance on Israel/Palestine on human rights and international law, notably since it spearheaded the Palestinian people's right to self-determination in the 1980 Venice Declaration. Instead of simply restating its predicated goal of the two states, promoting the Palestinian right to self-determination, alongside individual human rights, would provide the EU with an effective normative basis for policy guidance in the longest ongoing occupation in modern history. It would also constitute the EU's greatest strength in preserving its predicated two-state solution as a realistic policy objective.

The core principles of international law include the right to self-determination and the absolute prohibition of acquisition of a territory by force. The fulfilment of human rights and self-determination must be achieved for all Palestinians regardless of their location, including Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory, Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinian refugees in the region. Efforts to legitimize a policy of separation and fragmentation of the Palestinian population under institutionalised discrimination should be firmly resisted.

In the occupied Palestinian territory, the Israeli government continues to alter the demographic, territorial and legal realities on the ground, quickly reaching the point of no return through unrestrained settlement expansion, mounting exploitation of Palestinian natural resources and de facto annexation of the West Bank. These developments have disastrous consequences that will outlast the current US Administration. The EU would bear the cost not only in its neighbourhood, but also at global level, as they would further erode the rules-based international order in which the European vision is deeply rooted.

In view of the US-led economic workshop, taking place in Bahrain on 25-26 June, the EU and its Member States should be prepared to counter any economic and political efforts to normalise Israel's

control and annexation of the occupied Palestinian territory, as in the case of Jerusalem as well as the occupied Syrian Golan, undermine the rights of Palestinian refugees and endorse the existing discriminatory regime.

Europe should not accept anything falling short of the abovementioned standards and make all possible efforts to prevent the elimination of human rights. This would show that respect for human rights and compliance with international law is the only available and achievable path towards a just and durable solution, and that the EU is ready to put its weight behind this objective.

Yours sincerely,

The Undersigned organisations:

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ACT Alliance EU

Adalah – the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel

Al Haq

Al Marsad, Arab Human Rights Centre in Golan Heights

Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights

Associazione Ricreativa e Culturale Italiana (ARCI)

Broederlijk Delen

BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

CAFOD

CCFD - Terre Solidaire

CIDSE

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EuroMed Rights

ECCP - European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine

Gisha – Legal Center for Freedom of Movement

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center (JLAC)

La Plateforme des ONG françaises pour la Palestine

Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR)

Ligue des Droits Humains (LDH)

Médecins du Monde

Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP)

Medico International

Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR)

PAX for Peace

Pax Christi International

SOLIDAR

The Rights Forum

Trócaire

War on Want

Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC)