



To:

Ms Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Ministers of Foreign Affairs

Brussels, 6 December 2017

Re: Forthcoming meeting of Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu and EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs

Dear High Representative Mogherini, Ministers of Foreign Affairs,

I am writing to share with you EuroMed Rights concerns ahead **of your meeting with Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on 11 December 2017**. The meeting takes place as the occupation of the Palestinian territory enters its second half-century and despite the clear signals from the Israeli government that it has no intention of reversing this reality. Against this background, we call on EU leaders to **firmly uphold a human rights-based approach to the conflict** and to challenge Israel's continuous disregard for international law.

The occupation lies at the root of the systematic human rights abuses taking place from Gaza to the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Since the beginning of 2017, Israel has quickly advanced towards the normalisation of the occupation and entrenched its control over the West Bank, promoting a [sharp rise in settlement construction](#) and *de facto* annexation of Area C. The Israeli government has made crystal clear [it will never give up its settlements](#), in **stark contrast to the EU basis on which a solution to the conflict is identified as well as the recent UNSC Resolution 2334**. In Gaza, counter to the EU position and despite the beginnings of progress made on Palestinian reconciliation, the closure policy remains thoroughly and boldly implemented going into its second decade. Moreover, [policies](#) that privilege the State's Jewish over its democratic character are intensifying in Israel, which further institutionalises discrimination against its Palestinian citizens. In parallel, human rights defenders are increasingly targeted through [restrictive legislation](#) and policies seeking to weaken opposition to the occupation and daily human rights violations.

The 11 December meeting is reportedly set to **discuss bilateral ties between the EU and Israel**, which is already presented as a [big diplomatic victory](#) to the Israeli and international public. This meeting will further legitimise Israel's policies on the ground and undermine the EU's leverage in the conflict unless EU leaders present the Israeli Prime Minister with a clear message: **indefinite occupation and continued disregard of human rights are incompatible with strengthening relations**.

To avoid rewarding Israel's human rights record and sending the wrong message about the EU's positions on Israel/Palestine, EuroMed Rights urges the EU leaders to:

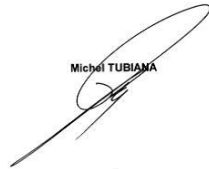
- Firmly challenge all efforts to normalise the occupation and expand settlement construction, including rejecting steps towards *de facto* annexation of Area C and the Greater Jerusalem Bill;
- Urge the Israeli government to refrain from enacting additional legislation that would contribute to further discrimination on the grounds of national or ethnic origin, notably the Jewish Nation-State Bill;
- Condemn all attempts to silence human rights defenders in Israel/Palestine, as they are a crucial element of a vibrant civil society that uphold EU common values in the context of the conflict;
- Denounce the Israeli government's systematic violations of human rights and its longstanding impunity, including torture and ill-treatment, the illegal Gaza closure, the growing fragmentation of the Palestinian territory and the Palestinians' right to self-determination;

- Strongly reinforce the EU's longstanding policy towards the conflict, which is soundly grounded in the strict respect for international law.

I look forward to receiving a response to our concerns and calls.

Yours sincerely,

Michel Tubiana
EuroMed Rights President



Michel TUBIANA