



# ELDH European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights

EJDM Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen & Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt

EJDH Asociación Europea de los Juristas por la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos en el Mundo

EJDH Association Européenne des Juristes pour la Démocratie & les Droits de l'Homme

EGDU Associazione Europea delle Giuriste e dei Giuristi per la Democrazia e i diritti dell'Uomo nel Mondo

WITH LAWYERS  
IN 23 COUNTRIES

Equality Privacy Social Rights  
No Racism Peace No Torture No War  
Self-Determination of Peoples Civil Rights Democracy  
Human Rights Rights of Migrants

Bologna, Donostia, Düsseldorf, Vienna, 07 June 2025

**Statement by the European Association of Lawyers for Democracy and Human Rights (ELDH)**  
**On the worsening catastrophe in the occupied Palestinian territory, the Legal Obligations of European countries, and the Urgent Need to secure an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, and to ensure the urgent, unconditional and unimpeded resumption of aid, at scale, to the population of Gaza;**

The European Association of Lawyers for Democracy and Human Rights (ELDH) with members in 23 European countries, expresses its profound alarm at the ongoing failure of European governments and institutions to fulfil their obligations under international law in response to the catastrophic and deliberate starvation campaign being carried out by Israel against the Palestinian people in Gaza, and the continuing and accelerating annexation by Israel of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) including the West Bank and East Jerusalem

ELDH demands that European governments and institutions act in accordance with their fundamental international legal obligations by taking, without delay, the following concrete actions:

- Use all available means to secure an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and to ensure the urgent, unconditional and unimpeded resumption of aid, at scale, to the population of Gaza;
- Use all available means to secure the lifting of Israel's ban upon the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA) throughout the entire OPTs;
- Impose financial and immigration sanctions in relation to Israeli Ministers and other civil and military personnel reasonably suspected of involvement in unlawful conduct; Israel's May 2025 plan – the implementation of which began on 16 May 2025– is to forcibly and permanently displace the population of Gaza to small areas of the Gaza Strip, and coerce their emigration to other countries, in grave violation of international humanitarian law, international criminal law and international human rights law.

ELDH European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights

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Israel has moreover decided in May 2025 to facilitate and accelerate settlement developments in the West Bank (including the territory designated as Area C under the Oslo Accords). Both measures exacerbate Israel's ongoing and longstanding breach of the jus cogens (non-derogable) right of self-determination of the Palestinian people.

All States are legally obliged to take all reasonable steps within their power to prevent and punish genocide; to ensure respect for international humanitarian law; and to bring to an end violations of jus cogens norms of international law.

The actions of European countries and institutions to date have failed to meet those standards.

Genocide is being perpetrated in Gaza or, at a minimum, there is a serious risk of genocide occurring. The limited aid now allowed into Gaza, after an 11-week blockade on food, medical supplies and the essentials of human existence, remains gravely insufficient to address the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe. Israel continues simultaneously to escalate its military operations in Gaza, while senior Israeli Ministers have expressed their intention to "take control of all the territory of the [Gaza] Strip" and "conquer, cleanse and stay – until Hamas is destroyed", further stating "what remains of the Strip is also being wiped out."

Second, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and serious violations of international humanitarian law are being committed in the OPTs.

Third, Israel has been found by the International Court of Justice in July 2024 to be violating peremptory norms of international law across the entire OPTs in denying the Palestinian people their right to self-determination and unlawfully annexing territory acquired by force.

Even the initiative of the UN Security Council on 4 June 2025 for a resolution demanding permanent ceasefire in Gaza, the immediate and unconditional lifting of all restrictions, and the release of all hostages, although supported by 14 Members of the UN SC, among them 3 EU member states (France, UK and Greece), has been blocked by a veto of the US.

In this context, ELDH fully supports two urgent, lawful and necessary initiatives:

1. **The Diplomatic Humanitarian Convoy through Rafah**, which calls on states to dispatch official diplomatic missions to accompany the more than 3,000 aid trucks currently blocked from entering Gaza. This initiative is grounded in legal obligations under the Geneva Conventions, the Genocide Convention, and ICJ rulings. European states must join and publicly support this convoy, facilitate its passage, and provide political and logistical assistance.
2. **The Freedom Flotilla Coalition**, whose ship departed from Italy on 1 June 2025 carrying essential medical aid, food, and baby supplies bound for Gaza. ELDH echoes the statement of UN experts that this mission is lawful and protected under international law. The ship has the right to free passage in international waters and to deliver aid via Palestinian territorial waters. ELDH condemns any threats or acts of violence by Israel against the Freedom Flotilla and demands full respect for the safety and navigation rights of its participants.

ELDH further urges European states and institutions to act in compliance with their binding obligations under international law:

- **Respect and ensure respect for the Geneva Conventions in all circumstances**, including by taking measures to end grave breaches such as collective punishment and the targeting of civilians.
- **Prevent and not assist the crime of genocide**, as mandated by the Genocide Convention.
- **Implement the ICJ's 2024 Advisory Opinion**, including through non-recognition of Israel's unlawful presence in the OPTs.
- **Adopt domestic legislation to ban trade with and investment in illegal Israeli settlements**, as called for by the UN General Assembly in September 2024.
- **Suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement**, in line with its human rights conditionality clause and in light of ongoing gross violations of international law.
- **Ensure that European nationals, companies, and public institutions do not contribute to the maintenance of the unlawful situation in Palestine**, including through trade, investment, financial services, or diplomatic support.
- **Publicly support and defend international accountability mechanisms**, including the ICC and UN agencies such as UNRWA, currently under financial and political attack.

The accumulation of blocked aid, the collapse of hospitals, and the decimation of food systems in Gaza are not coordination failures. They represent the **deliberate weaponisation of aid**, in violation of humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality, and humanity. The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation — backed by Israel and the US — seeks to militarise aid distribution and displace Palestinian civilians, further entrenching violations of international law.

ELDH reminds all European states: inaction in the face of genocide and starvation is not neutrality. It is complicity.

ELDH therefore issues this urgent call:

- **Support and join the Diplomatic Humanitarian Convoy through Rafah.**
- **Protect the Freedom Flotilla and defend the right to humanitarian passage.**
- European governments and institutions take all reasonable steps within their power to prevent and punish genocide; to ensure respect for international humanitarian law; and to bring to an end violations of jus cogens norms of international law.

These actions are not only moral imperatives — they are legal obligations. Anything less is a betrayal of the fundamental principles of international law and human dignity.