

Fall 2020

The relations among Israel, Europe, and the Palestinian Authority

Mohamed Ahmad Ali
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/creativecomponents>



Part of the [Comparative Politics Commons](#), and the [International Relations Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ali, Mohamed Ahmad, "The relations among Israel, Europe, and the Palestinian Authority" (2020). *Creative Components*. 626.

<https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/creativecomponents/626>

This Creative Component is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Creative Components by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.

Iowa State University

Department of Political Science

**The relations among Israel, Europe, and the
Palestinian Authority**

Mohamed A. Ali

Major Professor: James M. McCormick

Creative Component (2020)

Abstract

This research investigates the European Union's (EU) double standards towards Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people when compared to other countries, and whether those double standards are to the benefit or detriment of Israel. As Israel claims that the EU uses a double standard in its relationship with Israel against its interest, this research provides some evidence against this claim. The major participants in this research are the United Nations, EU, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority. Used within this research are news and journal articles, books, and direct quotations from leaders of multiple governments, governmental organizations, and governmental institutions to defend the arguments made. The continuous strong relationship between the EU and Israel is used in this research. This research concludes that the EU does not punish Israel despite Israel breaking international law in its treatment of Palestinian people, nor deny it the benefits the European Union offers. This work can be used towards deeper research into the Israeli-European Union disagreement and in creating policies to prevent future double standards from happening.

Keywords: Balfour, Double Standard, European Union, Israel, Palestine

Introduction

This research examines and assess the relationship of the European Union (EU) towards the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. The analysis will take the following form:

First, we provide a brief background on the history of the conflicted area in Palestine/Israel that continues to this day. Second, we look into the interest of the EU and its involvement with the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. Third, we provide some evidence on the actions the EU has taken towards each of these peoples. Lastly, we analyze and assess the extent to which the EU has engaged in what we call a “double standard” in its relationship with Israel and Palestine.

Arab and Jewish Involvement in Palestine

The Jewish population had existed in Palestine for some time, dating from the Ottoman Empire and earlier. It was located in the cities of Jerusalem, Safed, Tiberias, and Hebron. Their population had fluctuated through time with various communities. Their number in Palestine was about 25,000 Jews. At the start of the Zionist movement, small groups of Jews dispersed through Europe began to establish agricultural colonies in historical Palestine. At the end of World War I, and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Britain assumed a League of Nations mandate over Palestine. At that time, Great Britain, too, favored the establishment of a homeland to the Jewish people in Palestine.¹

In 1917, the British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour wrote a letter to Lord Walter Rothchild, an active Zionist, a letter that became known as the Balfour Declaration. This declaration gave a legal basis for Jewish immigration in Palestine.

¹ Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, November 2013, *Jewish Immigration to the Historical Palestine*

“His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”²

By 1936, and with Jewish immigration to Palestine, Jewish population had increased in the territory, but it was still very clear that the Arab population outnumbered the Jewish population. The total population was around 1.37 million with 982,614 Arabs and 384,078 Jews. Thus, the Jews were 28.1% of the total population.³

The increase in anti-Semitism in Europe led many more Jews to leave their countries and immigrate to the historic Palestine. During this period, the situation in Palestine had become unmanageable which led Britain to announce its intention to terminate its Mandate over Palestine. On May 17, 1947, Britain formally turned the Palestine case over to the United Nations leading to the partition resolution. That resolution took the following form: It “divided Palestine into seven cantons, constituting a Jewish state, an Arab state and an internationally-administered corpus separatum in Jerusalem, forming an economic union between them.”⁴

On May 14, 1948, the head of the Jewish Agency, David Ben-Gurion, declared the existence of the State of Israel. President Harry Truman announced the American recognition of Israel within hours. This rapid recognition seemed at odds with President Franklin Roosevelt’

²Jewish Virtual Library, September 2020, *Jewish & Non-Jewish Population of Israel/Palestine*

³ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013, *The Balfour Declaration*,

⁴ Economic Cooperation Foundation (ECF), *November 29, 1947, the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*

assurance to the Arabs “that the United States would not intervene without consulting both the Jews and the Arabs.” Great Britain sought to preserve its economic and political ties to Palestine. After Israel declared its independence in May 1948, the first Arab-Israeli war broke out when few Arab countries such as Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon invaded the territory in the Palestinian areas. After tense fighting, Israeli forces, with the help of the British forces, were able to gain the offensive. Israel gained more land from the Palestinian territories, while Egypt and Jordan retained control over the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.⁵

In 1956, the Suez crisis occurred, causing further tensions between Israel and the Arabs. The Egyptian Government seized control of the Suez Canal from the British and French-owned company that managed it. On October 29, 1956, Israeli forces moved across the border, defeated the Egyptian army in the Sinai with the help of the British and French troops in an effort to seize back the Canal. Eventually a cease-fire was arranged, and the first UN peacekeeping force was dispatched to the region to keep the peace and to facilitate the withdrawal of forces. Nonetheless, this war deepened the crisis and conflict between the Israelis and Arabs.⁶

In 1967, another major war between the parties occurred. The “Six Day War” started when Egypt and Jordan joined forces to attack Israel. On June 5, 1967, Israel launched a massive air assault against Egyptian airfields and destroyed most of Egypt’s air force. Israel controlled the Sinai Peninsula within three days. Israel then attacked Jordan and occupied the West Bank and the Old City before Jordan’s acceptance of a UN resolution for a ceasefire on June 7. Following Egypt’s acceptance of a ceasefire on June 8, the Israelis switched their attention to the strategic Syrian Golan Heights. Quneitra in the Golan Heights was occupied, and Syria accepted the

⁵ Department of State, United States of America, (1948), Office of the Historian, *Creation of Israel 1948*

⁶ Department of State, United States of America, released between 2001-2009, *Suez Crisis 1956*

ceasefire on June 10.⁷ As result of this war, Israel occupied not only the Golan Heights, but it took control of the West Bank of the Jordan, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Gaza Strip. These occupied territories further fueled the conflict.

Between these wars, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established in 1964. The PLO was an umbrella organization and included organizations of the resistance movement, political parties, and figures from all sectors of life.⁸ Starting in the late 1960s, moreover, the PLO launched attacks on Israel from its bases in Jordan. In 1971, the PLO was forced to relocate from Jordan, shifting its headquarters to Lebanon, which later led to the invasion of Israel to Lebanon in 1982.⁹

On November 26, 1973, the Arab Summit recognized the PLO as the “sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people”. The PLO, too, became the sole organization that represented Palestine at the United Nations. After few years of hostility, secret meetings held in Norway in 1993 between the PLO and Israel led to the signing of the historic Declaration of Principles (the Oslo Accords), in which the two sides agreed to mutual recognition and terms whereby governing functions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be handed over to a Palestinian council. The agreements between the sides called for the Palestinian Authority (PA) to take control over most populated areas in the occupied territories.¹⁰

In all, as this narrative suggests, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict became one of the world’s longest-running and most controversial conflicts. It is a conflict between two self-determination movements (the Jewish Zionist project and the Palestinian nationalist project) that lay claim to the

⁷ Aljazeera, December 9, 2003, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*

⁸ WordPress, 2020, Palestine Liberation Organization

⁹ History.com editors, AUG 21, 2018, Palestine Liberation Organization, *PLO attacks on Israel*

¹⁰Adam Zaidan, Editors of Britannica, July 2, 2020, *Palestinian National Authority*

same territory.¹¹ The ongoing conflict has engaged a number of other powers, including the nations of Europe and eventually the European Union.

European Union

In 1957, six countries signed a treaty to establish the European Economic Community (EEC) which was referred to as the Common Market. France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg were the original signatories to the Treaty of Rome, formally establishing the EEC. A principal motivation of the European leaders for this organization was that this kind of cooperation was the only way to prevent future wars in Europe.¹² In 1967, the European Community was created as an expansion of this initial pact, consolidating a Council of Ministers and the European Commission as a dual executive body. By the early 1970s, the Community started expanding its membership and eventually expanded its functions to more and more common activities, including the creation of a single market beginning by the mid-1980s.

In 1992, the Community members agreed on even closer cooperation. The European Community was renamed the European Union. Because the agreement was signed in the City of Maastricht, the treaty establishing the EU came to be known as the Maastricht Treaty.¹³ Subsequent treaties among the members expanded the level of integration of the signatories. Today, the EU consists of 27 countries after the United Kingdom announced its withdrawal from the EU on January 31, 2020.

¹¹ Zack Beauchamp, 2020, *Everything you need to know about Israel-Palestine*

¹² Chas Early, March 29, 2019, *Six European nations sign historic agreement to create a Common Market*

¹³ Mozaiikki, 2012, *History of the European Union*

European Interests in the Middle East

The European Union has been declaring its interest in the Middle East since 1973, and it has tried to play an active role in this region. The EU focuses on a number of central issues in the Middle East. Some of these including political reform, human rights, the peace process, relations between Islam and the West, immigration, regional cooperation, and their projected impact economic and political on the future of relations between Europe and the Middle East.¹⁴ In this sense, many analysts assert that the United States and Europe share common vital interests in the Middle East: fighting terrorism, limiting of weapons of mass destruction, promoting peace and stability, and observing and controlling flow of oil.¹⁵

The largest powers in Europe, France, Germany, and Britain, had particular interests in the Middle East and the Arab world. The French determination to become more active in the Mediterranean area has focused its political, economic, and cultural ties with the Arab states. The French were worried about the growing Soviet influence at the time which might endanger the vital flow of oil. The French looked to the long run to easing tensions in the Middle East. This would help and provide better economic opportunities for France to increase French exports to the Arab world.¹⁶

Germany's policies in the Middle East focused mainly on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its concern for peace and stability in the region. These include Israel's right to secure and recognize its border and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and earn a viable

¹⁴ European External Action Services (EEAS), December 5, 2016, *Delegation of the European Union to Israel*

¹⁵Kristin Archick Specialist in European Affairs Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, March 9, 2005, *European Views and Policies Toward the Middle East*

¹⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, October 1970, *Intelligence Memorandum*, French Economic Interests in the Arab World

state as called for in the UN Security Council Resolution 1397 in 2002. In addition, Germany has built a special relationship with Israel because of the persecution and murder of European Jews, which increased the depth of the relationship between German and Israeli societies.¹⁷

Britain was the major player in the Arab-Israeli conflict when they offered the Jews a homeland in Palestine. Britain also has a special relationship with Israel. The British government has not (or has rarely) condemned Israel for its violation of human rights and the killing of the Palestinians. Britain has a long history of helping Israel to develop nuclear weapons. In the 1950s and 1960s Conservative and Labor governments made hundreds of sales of nuclear materials to Israel, including plutonium and uranium. As the British Prime Minister Theresa May said once “[Israel is] one of the world's great success stories [and a] beacon of tolerance.” Defense Secretary Gavin Williamson said “[Israel is a] light unto the nations [whose relationship with the UK] is underpinned by a shared sense of values: justice, compassion, tolerance.”¹⁸

European Union’s Relations with Israel

Many Israelis see Europe as a source of what they see as unfair criticism for their government's policies towards Gaza and the West Bank, coupled with a failure to understand Israel's existential security threat. “They tend to view Europe as preaching solely at Israel and dismissing every other human rights violation in the world,” says Dahlia Scheindlin, a pollster and political strategist. “They also see Europe as hypocritical because of Europe's own history with relation to the Jews. You hear this very commonly in Israel – ‘look what they did to us just 70 years ago, and here they are telling us about human rights’.” There is little attempt, she adds, to

¹⁷ Heinrich Boll, 2002, *Germany and the Middle East Interests and Options*

¹⁸ Mark Curtis, August 10, 2018, *The raw truth about the UK's special relationship with Israel*

understand a European political culture that favors liberal democracy and emphasizes human and civil rights.¹⁹

Several reasons exist for this Israeli view toward Europe and the EU countries. One reason focuses on the cultural differences between the EU countries and Israel. The Israelis see “the lands given to the Palestinians contain places that have religious importance to the Jews.” Yet “there is less support in Israel for giving up lands than the EU may find justifiable.”²⁰ A second reason is differing perceptions. Europeans look at the actions done by Palestinian individuals as acts of individuals not representing the whole Palestinian society. This contradicts the views of the Israelis towards the Palestinians. The Israelis look at the violent actions of any Palestinian as an act of terrorism which represent the ideology of the Palestinian people. They believe that the Palestinians aim is the destruction of Israel. A third reason is about the actions of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) against Israeli products. The ECJ has ruled that Jewish products produced in Israeli-controlled territories (West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem) must be singled out and labeled separately if they are to be sold in the EU countries. Israel considered this action as a punishment and the start of warfare against Israel.²¹

In 2013, the EU drew new guidelines for trade between its member states and Israel. The guidelines were set against anyone residing in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. These guidelines were directed to all EU states from any funding and cooperating with the Jewish settlers in those areas. In addition, the European Parliament did not renew a contract with private security company, G4S, after the boycotting, divestment, sanctions (BDS)

¹⁹ James Landale, May 21, 2019, *Why Israel eyes the EU with distrust*

²⁰ Klaus Boehnke, 2003, *Israel and Europe*, PP. 31

²¹ Abraham Cooper and Benjamin Weinthal, November 26, 2019, *Europe's labeling of Israeli products recalls Third Reich's boycott of Jews*

campaigners complained that the company's work with the Israeli prison service made them complicit in the detention of Palestinian political prisoners.²²

The United Nations, the European Union, and several European states, including the United Kingdom, Germany, and France, have warned Israel against annexing parts of the occupied West Bank. High Representative of the European Union, Joseph Borrell Fontelles, said the bloc of 27 member countries "does not recognize Israeli sovereignty over the occupied West Bank" and that it will "closely monitor the situation and its broader implications, and will act accordingly". Germany said it "advises against the annexation of occupied Palestinian territories." Meanwhile, France's Ambassador to the UN, Nicolas de Rivière, went further and warned annexation "would not pass unchallenged and shall not be overlooked in our relationship with Israel."²³

The political relations between the EU and Israel have turned out to be especially ambiguous and unclear. As Israel claims that the EU is pro-Palestinians, but in fact the actions of the EU is in pursuance of the "two-state solution". Yet, from the European point of view, this position toward the conflict, which is defended by the Member States, does not constitute a hostile declaration toward Israel. The creation of a Palestinian State is the only long-term solution for the Israeli security to establish regional stability. Thus, the "linkage" is not supposed to act against Israel but for its interest.²⁴

In June 2009, the EU general affairs and external relations council put pressure on the Israeli government and called on the Prime Minister Netanyahu to commit to the two-state solution. The council assured their deep concerns on settlement activities, house demolitions and

²² The Coordination Forum for Countering Antisemitism (GFCA), December 4, 2014, *Top 10 countries that boycott Israel*

²³ Middle East Eye staff, 23 April 2020, UN, *European Union warn Israel against West Bank annexation*

²⁴ Caroline du Plessix, March 25, 2012, *The European Union and Israel*

evictions in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. The council urged the Israeli government to end settlement activities and to dismantle all outposts erected since March 2001. The council reaffirmed that settlements are illegal under international law and order.²⁵

Further, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), has been used as a framework for strengthening the EU-Israel relations. The ENP provides its “partners a greater access to the European internal market, better commercial conditions, and financial aid.” These multiple areas of cooperation between the EU and Israel illustrate the extent of the relationship. In this sense, Israel may consider itself as a Quasi-Member State of the European Union. Indeed, “in 2008, the EU even envisaged [enhancing] the economic cooperation by further integrating Israel in EU’s policies and programs. This was seen by some observers as a way of giving Israel the status of a Quasi-Member State.”²⁶

The diplomatic relations between Israel and the European countries are well maintained. They are based on similarities in their political systems and their shared social values, as much as on the long and, at times, tragic history of the Jewish people in Europe. Each bilateral relation is reflected in a wide variety of economic, cultural, scientific, technological and political activities. Besides this, regular contact is maintained with heads of state, ministers, members of parliament and public figures, through frequent visits from both sides.²⁷

EU and the Palestinians

The EU has been supportive towards the Palestinians since its creation. The EU is the biggest donor of external assistance to the Palestinians. Its support is based on a joint partnership,

²⁵Sharon Pardo and Joel Peters, 2012, *Israel and the European Union*, pp. 488-489

²⁶ Fabien Terpan, April 2010, *EU-Israel relations: in search of Coherent and Consistent EU Foreign Policy*

²⁷ Israel, (N.D.), *Relations between Israel and Europe (check references page for more information)*

founded upon the Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation. It was signed in 1997 between the European Community and the PLO on behalf of the Palestinian Authority.

In 1996, Israel opposed the drafting of a bilateral economic agreement between EU and the Palestinian Authority. At the time, Ireland was the current president of the EU and the Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring refrained from saying what would happen should Israel not make “a conciliatory gesture” during the European summit, but senior officials in the EU made it clear that in such case the EU would not sit idly by. This was alarming to Israel that such an agreement would provide an official license for the PA’s independent status.²⁸

In May 2013, a cooperative economic and political agreement, called the EU-Palestine Action Plan, was established between the parties and continues to this day. The European Union has been the largest contributor to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), contributing over \$1.4 billion during the 2016-2018 years. As such, and because the UNRWA supports Palestinian refugees’ countries in the Middle East, the European Union thus plays a crucial economic role in assisting those in the region.²⁹

While the EU has thus been very supportive economically to the Palestinians, it has also offered political support to the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people. On November 29, 2012, for instance, Palestine was given observer-status at the UN by the General Assembly GA/11317. The votes were 138 in favour, 9 votes against, and 41 abstentions. The European countries were split in their votes. Those voting in favor of this statues were Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland, but a number of European countries abstained. These included Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Netherland,

²⁸ Sharon Pardo and Joel Peters, 2012, *Israel and the European Union*, pp. 213-214

²⁹ European External Action Services (EEAS), January 1, 2019, *Support to Palestine refugees*

Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and United Kingdom. The only European country to oppose this UN General Assembly vote was the Czech Republic. It is interesting to note that some countries with long term involvement in the Middle East (e.g., France, Britain, and Germany) were somewhat divided on this vote, but none of these powers opposed the action by the United Nations. Despite political support, trade agreements, and relations between the PA and the EU, the EU has not recognized the State of Palestine.³⁰

The EU and UN resolutions against Israel

The United Nations (UN) is an international organization that was founded in 1945 by 51 countries in order to maintain international peace and security and promote better living standards and human rights. Today, there are 193 states as members of the United Nations. As noted earlier, the UN picked up where the league had failed, voting in 1947 to partition Palestine into two separate states (Jewish and Arab), and admitting Israel as a full member. The partition plan was rejected by the Arabs, no Arab state was created, and the UN has been dealing with that fallout ever since.³¹ “While the State of Israel was established on 15 May 1948 and admitted to the United Nations, a Palestinian State was not established.”³²

Several recent actions with the UN provide insight into European Union countries toward Israelis and the Palestinians. In late December 2016, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2334, lambasting Israel for creating “settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem.” The resolution also asserted that these settlements have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation under international law. The United States

³⁰ United Nations, November 29, 2012, Department of Public Information, *Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*

³¹ Paul Shindman, January 7, 2020, *Israel and the UN – A Good Relationship That Turned Toxic*

³² United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), 2020, *The questions of Palestine*

abstained on the resolution, allowing it to pass by a vote of 14 – 0, but the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China voted in favor of the resolution. This came as a blow to Israel. As usual, the United States could have exercised its veto to shield the Jewish state from such motions, but just weeks from leaving office and free of political constraint, President Obama opted to allow this Security Council condemnation. Moreover, and according to Israel sources, the president encouraged this action as a final gesture of his disapproval of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policies.³³

On September 17, 2019 in the 74th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), all EU member states voted for one resolution each to criticize Iran, Syria, North Korea, Myanmar, and the United States, for its embargo on Cuba, and two resolutions on Crimea. By contrast, EU states voted for 13 out of 18 resolutions singling out Israel. Yet these same EU states failed to introduce a single UNGA resolution on the human rights situation in China, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Belarus, Cuba, Turkey, Pakistan, Vietnam, Algeria, or on 175 other countries.³⁴

Analysis and Assessment of the European Union's Actions

The above analysis reflects a clear message that the EU has been opposing Israel's policies toward the Palestinians since its creation, but it does not appear to sanction Israel. In this sense, the EU has not been able to halt Israel's practices and violations of international law and human rights. In fact, the condemnations of the Israeli practices are insufficient since there has been no punishment or sanctions against Israel. All these condemnations have only been words, unbacked by true actions.

³³ Joshua Muravchik, 2017, *The UN and Israel: A History of Discrimination*

³⁴ UN Watch, November 19, 2019, *Resolutions Singling Out Israel – Texts, Votes, Analysis*

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused the European countries of applying a double standard and engaging in hypocrisy against Israel because they do not accept the United States decision to move the country's embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and, at the same time, those countries do not condemn missile strikes on Israeli territory. "While I respect Europe, I'm not ready to accept the policy of double standards on its part," Netanyahu was quoted saying to *The Times of Israel*.³⁵

The expansion of the illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and the annexation of East Jerusalem are violations of international law. United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 478 declares the annexation "a violation of international law" which is "null and void and must be rescinded."³⁶ It is clear that the EU has not punished Israel for its continuous violations. With Israel's continuation of its behavior, Israel continues to benefit from its relations with the EU, despite the conditionality attached to those relations.³⁷

According to a human rights review on the EU-Israel relationship, commissioned by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, "a network representing 80 human rights organizations, institutions, and defenders in 30 countries,"³⁸ that body concluded in December 2004 that the EU's policies are not enforcing the unlawful use of force against civilian persons and the unlawful destruction of civilian property. The EU has failed in three areas. First, the EU failed to respond to Israel's practice of certifying products that are produced in Israeli settlements as being of Israeli origin, which violates the EU-Israel Association Agreement. Second, the EU failed

³⁵ EurAsian Times Desk, December 10, 2017, *Benjamin Netanyahu Slams Europe's Double Standard*

³⁶ Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign, (N.D.), *Israel's violations of international law* (check references page for more information)

³⁷ Khalil Shikaki, June 27, 2019, *The Limits of European Influence in Palestine and Israel*

³⁸ Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, December 2004, *A human rights review on EU-Israel*

to ensure that the illegal settlement should not participate in trade relations and bilateral cooperation between the EU and Israel. Third, the EU has failed to make Israel responsible and accept the legal and financial responsibility under international law for wrongdoing caused by Israel's violations of international humanitarian law.³⁹

Israel's building of settlements in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, does not respect any of the international laws. It has been violating the international law against the beliefs of the EU and the United Nations. For many years, Israel's settlements policies are considered a main driving force behind the mass human rights violations against the rules of Amnesty International. Despite the international condemnation of Israeli practices against the Palestinian people and its aggression in occupying more land and building more illegal settlements, the EU has not put any pressure on Israel to stop its actions. Instead, the EU is still considered a good partner to Israel and builds trade and economic relationship with each other.

The EU is Israel's largest trade market and accounts for about a third of Israel's total trade. Israel is the EU's most important trading partner in the Mediterranean area and was ranked as the EU's 24th trade partner globally in 2016. Israel benefits from the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI), which provides most of the funding under European Neighborhood Policy. From 2014 to 2020, it is expected that the Israeli government will receive ENI funding total about \$3.3 million annually) to cover Twinning Projects. "The Twinning Projects are financed by the European Commission where the beneficiary partner contributes to project with human resources, office space and equipment, and training services."⁴⁰The Israeli Ministry of Communications (MOC) has asked the EU for assistance to help in the frame of a twinning project in the area of

³⁹ Arjan El Fassed, March 11, 2005, *In bed with Israel: EU's close relationship with Israel supports abuse*

⁴⁰ Twinning Project, 2012, *What is twinning?*

regulation of Electronic Communications. The EU accepted the request and provided a 1.5 million Euro (1.78 million dollars) grant to Israel in order to support the implementation of the program⁴¹ The Israeli non-governmental bodies are eligible for support under a variety of programs funded under ENI and other EU budgets.⁴²

By contrast, we have seen in the past that the EU has imposed sanctions on Iraq, Iran, Syria, and North Korea for violating human rights and breaking international law. In this sense, there appears to be a double standard in the actions of the EU towards Israel. We should expect the same sanctions to be imposed against Israel as applied to other states for any documented violations.

Israel's claim that the EU performs a double standard position and engages in hypocrisy against Israel is not wholly supported by our analysis. Israel claims Europe does not condemn Hamas (Palestinian Resistant Group) against Israel, when actually many European countries like (Germany, United Kingdom, France, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Iceland, Netherland, Norway, Poland, Romania, and Spain) were in favor of resolution draft A/73/L.42 and agreed to back the UN resolution condemning Hamas. The draft was introduced by the United States on November 29, 2018. It condemns Hamas for repeatedly firing rockets into Israel and for inciting violence, therefor putting civilians at risk.⁴³ The UNGA failed to adopt the text in document A/73/L.42 (activities of Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza). While the text gained plurality support in a recorded vote of 87 in favour to 57 against, with 33 abstentions, it failed to meet the two-thirds adoption requirement.⁴⁴

⁴¹Twinning project funded by the EU, 2019, *EU Twinning project at the Israeli Ministry of Communications*

⁴²European External Action Services (EEAS), December 5, 2016, *Delegation of the European Union to Israel*

⁴³ Raphael Ahren, November 30, 2018, *Europe agrees to back UN resolution condemning Hamas terror group*

⁴⁴United Nations, December 6, 2018, *Failing to Pass Resolution Condemning Hamas*

According to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, “there is a natural tendency in the EU establishment to single out Israel and treat it in ways other countries are not being dealt with.” Several pieces of evidence identified from Martin Konecny’s article (“EU Double Standard on Israel”) to challenge this position.⁴⁵

1- **Human Rights:** The European Parliament has committees relevant to human rights in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. These committees are the Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET), the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI), the Women’s Rights and Gender Equality Committee (FEMM), and finally the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE).⁴⁶ Since the EU is deeply committed to the protection and promotion of human rights in its internal and external policies, we have not seen any action from any committee against Israel. While the EU strongly condemns Iran, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Egypt for human rights violations, we have not seen strong condemnation or acts against Israel.⁴⁷ In fact, the EU has deeper relations with Israel than any other country in the region. Israel’s human rights issues have been given a low priority to these committees.

2- **International Criminal Court:** “The EU strongly supports the International Criminal Court (ICC). It uses trade and development agreements with many countries and encourages them to join the Hague Court. But in the case of Palestine, foremost EU states pressured the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas not to seek membership, which could lead to prosecution of both Israelis and Palestinians for war crimes. This

⁴⁵ Martin Konecny (runs the European Middle East Project (EuMEP) in Brussels), February 22, 2016, *EU double standards on Israel*

⁴⁶ Euromed Rights, *The European Parliament*

⁴⁷ Przemysław Osiewicz, June 20, 2019, *The EU needs a more robust Middle East human rights report*

- could undermine the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.... When Palestine joined the ICC in April 2015, it was the first time that the EU did not issue a welcoming statement.”⁴⁸
- 3- **Sanctions:** “The EU applies sanctions to more than 30 countries around the world, but Israel is not on the list.”⁴⁹ Despite of all the violations by Israel of international law and human rights in the occupied territories, the EU has condemned, but not brought even a minor sanction against Israel. All these condemnations are meant to keep the credibility of the EU in front of the international community.
- 4- **Security of the People:** The EU has always cared about the security of Israel but rarely mentions the security of the Palestinian people. By condemning Hamas on firing rockets on Israel and creating a minimum casualty, Israel always retaliates with a larger scale of attacks against Hamas and innocent people where thousands of lives have been lost. Where is the EU involvement and the protection of human lives?
- 5- **Nuclear Weapons Possession:** As we know that the EU watches and observes the Middle East to be nuclear weapon free, we saw sanctions on Iraq, Iran, Syria, and North Korea, but we have not seen any sanctions on Israel. “Europeans often vote against international resolutions calling on Israel to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which would open its nuclear facilities to inspections,”⁵⁰ as the one in Daimona. The big question to ask is why Israel has to possess nuclear weapons for its security and other countries in the Middle East cannot? This is a double standard and hypocrisy in the international community and the EU who could play a fairer role in the Middle East.

⁴⁸ Martin Konecny, February 22, 2016, *EU double standards on Israel*

⁴⁹ Martin Konecny, February 22, 2016, *EU double standards on Israel*

⁵⁰ Martin Konecny, February 22, 2016, *EU double standards on Israel*

6- **Palestinian Refugees and Jewish Immigration:** The UNGA adopts resolution 194 (III), resolving that “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date....”⁵¹ The European countries (that are part of the EU today) who voted in favor of the resolution were: Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherland, Sweden, United Kingdom. Nearly one-third of the registered Palestinian refugees, more than 1.5 million individuals, live in 58 recognized Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.⁵² All the refugees cannot go back to their hometowns in historic Palestine. On the other hand, in 1950, Israel’s Knesset passed a remarkable law, beginning with a few simple words that defined Israel’s central purpose: “Every Jew has the right to immigrate to this country (Israel)...”⁵³ The immigration of Jews has been happening for a long time. Where is the position of the EU on such a law? What happened to resolution 194 that allows the Palestinians to go back to their homes? Is this another example of the hypocrisy of the EU towards the Palestinians rights and UN resolution 194?

In this research, we also reached out to Hugh Lovatt from the European Council on Foreign Relations, to get a guidance and lead sources on this issue. We thus used some sources like Michael Konecny’s article that summarizes the issue of this research. This work can be utilized for developing additional research on Israeli-European Union disagreement and for initiating policies to prevent the application of double standards in the future.

⁵¹ United Nations Relief and Works Agency, 1940, *Resolution 194, UNRWA*

⁵² United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), 1946-1948, *Palestinian Refugees*

⁵³ The law of return, 1950, *The Jewish Agency of Israel*

Conclusion

The relations between the EU and Israel have not always been smooth and strong. The EU has criticized Israel's actions in the Palestinian territories for decades. The EU condemned Israel in the United Nations several times and drew lines in their relationship. Despite the criticism, the EU has not put real pressure on Israel, while the latter continued to violate human rights and break international law. The economic and political relations between the EU and Israel remain strong. If the EU had taken serious actions against Israel for violating human rights and breaking international law, they could have placed economic sanctions on Israel in the way in which they imposed them on Iraq, Iran, Syria, and North Korea. The EU has been playing a double standard position with Israel for the benefits of Israel's interests and has not been singling out Israel with special treatment in the Middle East.

References

Abraham Cooper and Benjamin Weinthal, November 26, 2019, *Europe's labeling of Israeli products recalls Third Reich's boycott of Jews*, <https://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/471632-europes-labeling-of-israeli-products-recalls-third-reichs-boycott-of>

Adam Zaidan, Editors of Britannica, July 2, 2020, *Palestinian National Authority*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/palestinian-authority>

Aljazeera, December 9, 2003, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2003/12/9/the-arab-israeli-wars#1967>

Arjan El Fassed, March 11, 2005, *In bed with Israel: EU's close relationship with Israel supports abuse*, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/bed-israel-eus-close-relationship-israel-supports-abuse/5459>

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, November 2013, *Jewish Immigration to Historical Palestine*, https://www.cjpme.org/fs_181

Caroline du Plessix, March 25, 2012, *The European Union and Israel*, <https://journals.openedition.org/bcrfj/6675>

Central Intelligence Agency, October 1970, Intelligence Memorandum, *French Economic Interests in the Arab World*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP85T00875R001600030146-7.pdf>

Chas Early, March 25, 2019, *Six European nations sign historic agreement to create a 'Common Market'*, <https://home.bt.com/news/on-this-day/march-25-1957-european-nations-make-historic-agreement-to-create-common-market-11364047768487>

Department of State, United State of America, 1945-1952, Office of the Historian, *The Arab-Israeli War of 1948*, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/arab-israeli-war#:~:text=After%20Israel%20declared%20its%20independence,in%20the%20former%20Palestinian%20mandate.&text=This%20action%20was%20followed%20by,Syria%2C%20Iraq%2C%20and%20Egypt>

Department of State, United State of America, (1948), Office of the Historian, *Creation of Israel 1948*, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/creation-israel>

Department of State, United states of America, 2001-2009, *Suez Crisis 1956*, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/lw/97179.htm>

Economic Cooperation Foundation (ECF), November 29, 1947, *the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, <https://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/102>

EurAsian Times Desk, December 10, 2017, *Benjamin Netanyahu Slams Europe's Double Standard*, <https://eurasianimes.com/benjamin-netanyahu-europe-israel/>

Euromed Rights, (N.D.), *The European Parliament*, <https://euomedrights.org/training-path-program/step-1-the-european-union/the-european-parliament/>

European External Action Services (EEAS), January 1, 2019, *Support to Palestine refugees*, https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/palestine-occupied-palestinian-territory-west-bank-and-gaza-strip/65640/support-palestine-refugees_en

European External Action Services (EEAS), December 5, 2016, *Delegation of the European Union to Israel*, https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/israel/1337/israel-and-eu_en

Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, December 2004, *A human rights review on EU-Israel*, <https://euromedrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/A-Human-Rights-Review-of-the-EU-and-Israel-2003-2004-relating-commitments-to-actions-EN.pdf>

Fabien Terpan, April 2010, *EU-Israel relations: in search of Coherent and Consistent EU Foreign Policy*, <http://www.ies.be/files/Terpan-H3.pdf>

Heinrich Boll, 2002, *Germany and the Middle East Interests and Options*, https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/fachpublikationen/GermanyAndTheMiddleEast_mitKopierschutz.pdf

History.com editors, AUG 21, 2018, Palestine Liberation Organization, *PLO attacks on Israel*, <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/plo>

Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign, (N.D.), *Israel's violations of international law*, <https://www.ipsc.ie/israels-violations-of-international-law-a-brief-introduction>

Israel, (N.D.), *Relations between Israel and Europe*, <https://embassies.gov.il/hague-en/aboutisrael/Relations/Pages/Relations-Israel-and-Europe.aspx>

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013, *The Balfour Declaration*, <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/Maps/Pages/The-Balfour-Declaration.aspx>

James Landale, May 21, 2019, *Why Israel eyes the EU with distrust*, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48333919>

Jewish Virtual Library, September 2020, *Jewish & Non-Jewish Population of Israel/Palestine*, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-and-non-jewish-population-of-israel-palestine-1517-present>

Joshua Muravchik, 2017, *The UN and Israel: A History of Discrimination*,
<https://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/2017/04/03/the-un-and-israel-a-history-of-discrimination/>

Jpost, November 14, 2019, *Shame on Europe*, <https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Shame-on-Europe-607916>

Khalid Elgendy, May 17, 2018, *Once upon a time, America supported Palestinians*,
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/05/17/once-upon-a-time-america-supported-palestine/>

Khalil Shikaki, June 27, 2019, *The Limits of European Influence in Palestine and Israel*,
<https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/79390>

Klaus Boehnke, 2003, *Israel and Europe*, PP. 31

Kristin Archick, March 9, 2005, *European Views and Policies Toward the Middle East*,
<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL31956.pdf>

Mark Curtis, August 10, 2018, *The raw truth about the UK's special relationship with Israel*,
<https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/raw-truth-about-uks-special-relationship-israel>

Martin Konecny, February 22, 2016, *EU double standards on Israel*,
<http://euobserver.com/opinion/132361>

Middle East Eye Staff (MEE), 23 April 2020, *UN, European Union warn Israel against West Bank annexation*, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/un-eu-denounce-israel-plans-annex-parts-occupied-west-bank>

Mozaiikki, 2012, Information Campaign of the European Parliament, *History of the European Union*, <http://europarlamenti.info/en/European-union/history/>

Noa Landau, Mar 27, 2019, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-eu-states-we-do-not-recognize-israeli-sovereignty-over-golan-heights-1.7062664>

Paul Shinman, January 7, 2020, *Israel and the UN – A Good Relationship That Turned Toxic*, <https://honestreporting.com/israel-un-united-nations-good-relationship-tuned-toxic/>

Przemysław Osiewicz, June 20, 2019, *The EU needs a more robust Middle East human rights report*, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/eu-needs-more-robust-middle-east-human-rights-report>

Raphael Ahren, November 30, 2018, *Europe agrees to back UN resolution condemning Hamas terror group*, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/europe-agrees-to-back-un-resolution-condemning-amas/>

Sharon Pardo and Joel Peters, 2012, *Israel and the European Union*, pp. 213-214, pp. 488-489

The Coordination Forum for Countering Antisemitism (GFCA), December 4, 2014, *Top 10 countries that boycott Israel*, <https://antisemitism.org.il/en/86522/>

The law of return, 1950, *The Jewish Agency of Israel*, <http://archive.jewishagency.org/first-steps/program/5131>

Twinning Project, 2012, *What is twinning?* <http://bih-parliamentary-twinning.eu/what-is-twinning>

Twinning project funded by the EU, 2019, *EU Twinning project at the Israeli Ministry of Communications*, <https://www.twinningmocisrael.eu/>

United Nations, November 29, 2012, *Department of Public Information, Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2012/ga11317.doc.htm>

United Nations, December 6, 2018, *Failing to Pass Resolution Condemning Hamas*,
<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ga-reiterates-call-for-middle-east-peace-after-failing-to-pass-resolution-condemning-amas-press-release/>

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), 2020, *The questions of Palestine*, <https://unctad.org/Topic/Vulnerable-Economies/Palestine/The-question-of-Palestine>

United Nations Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA, 1940, *Resolution 194*,
<https://www.unrwa.org/content/resolution-194>

United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), 1946-1948, *Palestinian Refugees*,
<https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees#mm-4>

UN Watch, November 19, 2019, *Resolutions Singling Out Israel – Texts, Votes, Analysis*,
<https://unwatch.org/2019-un-general-assembly-resolutions-singling-out-israel-texts-votes-analysis/>

WordPress, 2020, *Palestine Liberation Organization*, <http://palestineun.org/about-palestine/palestine-liberation-organization/>

Zack Beauchamp, 2020, *Everything you need to know about Israel-Palestine*,
<https://www.vox.com/2018/11/20/18079996/israel-palestine-conflict-guide-explainer>