

## Keeping Human Rights in the International Order:

### *Europe's role for a lasting peace in Israel and Palestine*



19 February 2026

Today's inaugural meeting of the "Board of Peace" (BoP) marks a crucial moment for the future of Israelis and Palestinians and the credibility of international law. With its initial focus on the Israel-Palestine conflict, the effects of the BoP on both sides will be decisive for the reception of this unorthodox international body. Initial efforts of the US-led 20 point plan produced fast results by inducing the long-awaited release and transfer of all living and killed hostages – that have been taken by Hamas after the terror attacks of 7 October 2023 – , the release of almost two thousand Palestinians held captive under administrative detention and a semi-functional cease-fire. The newly formed BoP is now tasked with advancing the second phase of the peace plan at a time when the peace process appears to have been stalled equally by the Israeli government, Hamas and the US-led initiative. Therefore, we approach this meeting with concern, as it may further delay the implementation of lasting peace and Palestinian self-determination. On a broader scale, we are concerned that this unconventional body challenges the rule-based world order that has been established after World War II: The centre of multilateralism has since been the United Nations. Both concerns are varyingly troubling for European actors committed to an international order grounded in the UN and the protection of Human Rights.

We are alarmed by the likelihood of any further delays in realizing the rights of the Palestinians. We continue to witness a deterioration in the humanitarian situation in all parts of the occupied Palestinian territories. While the momentum generated by the initial success of the 20 point plan is fading, various legislative decisions by the Israeli government and the unilateral abuse of executive powers are threatening and harming the humanitarian situation. The insufficiently implemented reopening of the Rafah crossing, the INGO Registration & License Revocation Measures, NGO Taxation Bill, the International Criminal Court (ICC) Cooperation Criminalization Bill and the Penal Code Amendment No. 159 as well as the cabinet's push for an intensifying and formalizing of the illegal and increasingly violent settlements in the West Bank violate international law. The Military Order No. 1650 a.o. results of the belligerent occupation prevent independent journalists from reporting comprehensively on the rights violations.

Simultaneously, we are alarmed by the undermining of established international institutions such as the UN by vaguely composed multilateral bodies as the BoP. While the 20 point plan was endorsed by the UN Security Council on 17 November 2025 – a decision that was taken without having been aware of the BoP's potential design –, the later concrete composition of the BoP raises doubts about the board's alignment with the UN's normative framework. The decision to hold the BoP's first meeting at the renamed United States Institute of Peace, as well as granting decision-making-power to Donald J. Trump in his personal capacity, perceptibly diverge from a multilateral committee guiding the region's peacemaking process based on international norms and law. The Executive Order 14203 of the US-administration lays bare an inherent contradiction between the US-driven efforts of a new international order and the established order represented by the UN and its attachments as the ICC.

Therefore, we are convinced that European nations must strongly stand up for the following:

- a) A realization of unrestricted humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people in the Gaza-strip, esp. by demanding a halt/revocation to the Knesset's bills on preventing humanitarian aid organizations (including church-based organizations) from operating in the Gaza strip and practically banning them from Israel through the proposed 80% NGO-tax.
- b) A defined pathway for a lasting peace in the region that is only possible through the realization of the Palestinian right to self-determination granted by international law. This includes a territorial integrity that shall not be violated by any ongoing illegal settlement projects that violate the ICC's ruling on 19 July 2024.
- c) The disarmament of Hamas as well as the establishment of a democratic Palestinian self-governance, which can only stem from honest and comprehensive reform- and election-efforts by the Palestinian Authority – the only legitimate representation of the Palestinians in the occupied territories.
- d) The protection of the Christian minorities in the Holy Land that experience increasing oppression and violation of their right to freedom of religion – not least through expropriations in Jerusalem and taxation threats against the Churches.
- e) The enabling of independent journalistic reports in the occupied territories.
- f) The interest in an international order that is based on international law and founded in the common conviction for the UDHR and supervised though established international institutions that guarantee the ability of all nations to participate.

If the further process of the BoP cannot guarantee the realization of natural rights in the region, the European Commission must resort to the halted conceptualizing of executive measures against all actors obstructing the peacemaking process.

Accordingly, we, European citizens united by a common Christian faith, united by the adherence and respect due to an international law that is founded in our shared conviction for natural and inviolable human rights urge our respective European States and the EU institutions to decisively react to the result of the first meeting of the BoP.

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*The Initiative of Christians for Europe (IXE) is an association of lay organizations and committed Christians from different European countries. General concern of IXE is to incorporate a more vivid awareness of a united Europe in the national debates. The initiative aims at fostering the encounter of Christians in Europe and to promote the Social Doctrine of the Church in order to achieve a better mutual knowledge and understanding of historical and cultural differences. Read more on <https://christiansforeurope.com/>*