

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party
for the South East of England

Commissioner Ferrero Waldner
DG External Relations
The European Commission
200 Rue de la Loi
B1049 Brussels
Belgium

January 24th 2008

Dear Commissioner,

I warmly welcome the proactive role that the Commissioner has played in urging Israel to refrain from the 'collective punishment' of the people of Gaza and calling for an end to the blockade on fuel, commercial and humanitarian supplies. The UN is particularly concerned about food aid reaching 860,000 vulnerable people in the Gaza Strip and Oxfam has stressed the impact of the blockade on the regions water sanitation system, already 'running on empty'.

It seems the world is united in condemning these latest breaches of humanitarian law, international human rights law and the Fourth Geneva Convention by the Israeli government.

The EU's Association Agreement is expressly contingent on Israel meeting basic human rights yet, despite, persistent breaches, these clauses have never been invoked. It is surely now more apparent than ever before that Israel is not respecting the EU's principles with regards to civil and human rights, as detailed in the 'Copenhagen Criteria'. Under these circumstances, it is clear that the EU's Association Agreement with Israel must be immediately suspended.

Such a move would not only place pressure on the Israeli government, sending a decisive message about Europe's unwillingness to tolerate the targeting of Palestine's civilian population. It would also communicate hope to the beleaguered population of Gaza who feel forgotten by the EU. Peace can only flourish in a climate of hope, so I would also call on the EU to consider bringing international protection to occupied Gaza and the West Bank as a way of ensuring the safety of the Palestinian population.

As you rightly recognise, it is immoral and illegal to punish a civilian population. Many international experts predicted that the crisis in Gaza would escalate if the Palestinian people were penalised for 'wrongly' backing Hamas in January 2006's elections. These predictions were accurate. I am urging you to back your words with decisive action and hold Israel to account over its lack of respect for human rights by suspending the trade agreement. In doing so, I believe the EU would have the opportunity to play a significant role in bringing peace to the Middle East.

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.