The Palestine Solidarity Movement in Europe: State Complicity and Lessons for Transnational Mobilization

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BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights is an independent, non-profit human rights organization working to defend and promote the rights of Palestinian refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Our vision, mission, programs and relationships are defined by our Palestinian identity and the principles of international humanitarian and human rights law. We seek to advance the individual and collective rights of the Palestinian people on this basis.

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The Palestine Solidarity Movement in Europe: State Complicity and Lessons for Transnational Mobilization

Since October 2023, the world has been witnessing the live-broadcasted Israeli genocide in the Gaza Strip, provoking global outrage, mobilization, and solidarity demanding an end to Israeli crimes and the realization of Palestinian liberation and self-determination. Historically, the Palestinian cause emerged as a unifying focus for anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements across the majority world. Grounded in a decolonial consciousness, Western solidarity with Palestine grew out of student movements, internationalist leftist political movements and anti-imperialist alliances during the 1960s and 1970s, laying the foundation for the contemporary Palestinian solidarity movement.[1] This paper explores the diverse forms of solidarity action across Europe, their achievements, state responses, as well as key obstacles and the lessons learned.

1 Sunnemark, Ludvig. "The Palestine Solidarity Movement as Solidarity Ecology: Discourses and Strategies of Solidarity within the pro-Palestinian Student Movement." *Critical Sociology*, October 18, 2025.

Section I:
Scope of Actions and Achievements of the Palestine Solidarity Movement

More than two years of sustained grassroots mobilization have transformed solidarity with Palestine into one of the largest and most enduring international movements for justice, decolonization, and collective liberation in recent history. Through mass demonstrations, direct action, student uprisings, labor resistance, and legal challenges, the Palestine solidarity movement has altered a political consciousness among people, by exposing the crimes of the Israeli regime and European colonial states' political, economic and military complicity. Bringing together a diverse range of actors, strategies, and political positions, the movement has pushed for a diversity of demands ranging from an immediate ceasefire and calls for military embargoes, to boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaigns, accountability, and broader calls for the dismantling the Israeli colonial-apartheid regime and the liberation of Palestine.

Mass mobilization and a growing political consciousness

In response to the ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip, events and protests have been organized across European cities, with thousands of people taking to the streets to demand an end to Israeli crimes and European colonial states' complicity. The European Palestinian Media Center (EPAL) has documented more than 45,000 demonstrations and events across approximately 800 cities in 25 European countries over the first two years of genocide. Italy ranked first with 7,643 demonstrations and events in 186 cities, followed by Germany with around 6,900 events

across 141 cities, and Spain with 5,886 events in 134 cities.[2] In October 2025, hundreds of thousands of people rallied in Italy demanding an end to the genocide in Gaza, while a general strike halted key services across the country.[3] Inspired by the movement in Italy, trade unions and student organizations in Spain[4] and Greece[5] staged general strikes and mass protests in solidarity with Palestine, mobilizing tens of thousands of people.

Through demonstrations, awareness-raising events, teach-ins, cultural initiatives, and social media campaigns, the movement has challenged dominant Zionist narratives and brought forth the crimes of colonialism, apartheid, genocide, as well as the role of international solidarity into societal debates. Across many European countries, public opinion polls indicate growing criticism of the Israeli regime and declining support for unconditional political and economic cooperation. For instance, a poll by Pew Research Center found that in almost all European countries surveyed (except for Hungary) two-thirds or more hold an unfavorable view of the Israeli regime and that in most countries the negative opinion has increased significantly over the past years.[6]

Although demonstrations in Europe began to subside after the fake ceasefire in October 2025, due to the illusion of calm and perceived loss

2 Palestinian Information Center. EPAL: 45,000 Demonstrations in Europe in Support of Gaza over Two Years. News. October 6, 2025. https://english.palinfo.com/news/2025/10/06/349178/.

3 Peoples Dispatch. "Workers Shut down Italy Again in Solidarity with Palestine." *Peoples Dispatch*, October 3, 2025. https://peoplesdispatch.org/2025/10/03/workers-shut-down-italy-again-in-solidarity-with-palestine/.

4 Vračar, Ana. "Workers and Students across Spain Strike for Palestine." *Peoples Dispatch*, October 16, 2025. https://peoplesdispatch.org/2025/10/16/workers-and-students-across-spain-strike-for-palestine/.

5 Royle, Camilla. "Strikes across Greece Block Everything for Palestine." *Socialist Worker*, October 10, 2025. https://socialistworker.co.uk/international/strikes-across-greece-block-everything-for-palestine/.

6 Silver, Laura, and Laura Clancy. "Negative Views of Israel, Low Confidence in Netanyahu across 36 Countries." *Pew Research Center*, June 4, 2026. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2026/06/04/most-people-across-36-countries-have-negative-views-of-israel-and-little-confidence-in-netanyahu/.

of urgency, the political consciousness generated through more than two years of sustained mobilization must endure and cannot subside.

Student mobilization against academic complicity

In 2024, a particular rise in student mobilization occurred as part of the global solidarity movement with Palestine. Student activists organized numerous protests, lectures and sit-ins, occupying university buildings and campus spaces across European cities[7]. These university encampments and protests became powerful symbols of a student movement drawing attention to the material links between European universities and the Israeli regime. Research conducted by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign found that universities in the United Kingdom alone had invested more than £456 billion in companies complicit in Israeli violations of international law.[8] These financial and institutional ties became a central focus of student demands for divestment and accountability.[9]

The importance of student solidarity movements and actions for Palestine reflects their historical role as sites of political struggle. From protests against the Vietnam War and the anti-apartheid demonstrations in South Africa to contemporary movements for Palestinian liberation, university-based movements have served not only as spaces of knowledge production but also as important arenas for mobilization of public opinion and anti-imperialist and liberation struggles.[10]

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7 Porta, Donatella della, Federica Stagni, Stella Christou, and Martín Portos. 2026. "Prefigurating Democracy: The Pro-Palestinian Student Camps as Eventful Protests." *The Sociological Quarterly*, January, 1–27.

8 Palestine Solidarity Campaign. "University Complicity Database." 2025. https://palestinecampaign.org/university-complicity-database/.

9 Academic Complicity. "Mapping Institutional Ties with Israel across Europe!" *Academic Complicity*, 2026. https://academiccomplicity.eu/.

10 The New Arab. "Student Protests: From Vietnam to Palestine." *The New Arab*, April 26, 2024. https://www.newarab.com/features/student-protests-vietnam-palestine.

At the same time, European academic institutions continue to be shaped by colonial power structures, which render them sites of repression and complicity [11]. In some cases, universities responded to the protests and encampments with heavy crack-downs, often escalating their response by involving the police to suppress campus activism. In addition, universities have used administrative and disciplinary procedures to sanction students and faculty who express solidarity with Palestine[12].

Even though large-scale encampments and occupations have been absent in 2025 and 2026, the continued pressure of the student movement led to several suspensions of collaboration agreements and institutional partnerships between European and Israeli universities. For instance, in response to student pressure, Trinity College Dublin was the first European university which not only severed all academic partnership with Israeli institutions but also decided to divest from complicit companies[13]. While others such as Ghent University in Belgium moved to suspend ties in mid-2024, they fall short from implementing full-scale divestment from complicit companies. Despite these important gains, the movement succeeded mostly in achieving academic boycott, but large-scale divestment of institutions has not yet materialized.[14]

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11 Abu Samra, Mjriam. "Decolonization Is a Pedagogical Struggle: Rethinking Liberal Academia's Role in Palestine." Comment. *UntoldMag*, March 19, 2025. https://untoldmag.org/decolonization-is-a-pedagogical-struggle-rethinking-liberal-academias-role-in-palestine/.

12 Grimm, Jannis Julien, and Lilian Mauthofer. "The Palestine Test for German Universities." *Middle East Report*, no. 318 (2026); Pali, Brunilda, and Polly Pallister-Wilkins. "From Police Violence to (Self) Censorship: Mapping the Continuum of Criminalization of Student-Led Palestine Solidarity Activism in the Netherlands." Criminological Encounters 7, no. 1 (2025): 57–71.

13 Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). "Trinity College Dublin Becomes First University in the West to Comprehensively Cut Ties With Israel." *BDS Movement*, June 6, 2025. https://bdsmovement.net/news/trinity-college-dublin-becomes-first-university-west-comprehensively-cut-ties-israel.

14 Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). "Universities Are Ending Complicity in Israeli Apartheid and Its Gaza Genocide in Numbers Never Seen Before." *BDS Movement*, December 31, 2024. https://bdsmovement.net/news/universities-are-ending-complicity-israeli-apartheid-and-its-gaza-genocide-numbers-never-seen.

Action against military infrastructure

Next to mass demonstrations, direct actions such as sit-ins, blockades and acts of sabotage, have emerged as powerful strategies for disrupting the status-quo and, in some cases, imposing material costs. Actions targeting the production and transport of military and surveillance goods in different forms have shown to be most impactful, as they directly disrupt the infrastructures sustaining Israeli settler colonialism and genocide. For example, sustained direct action campaigns by Palestine Action against Elbit Systems contributed to approximately £6 million in lost sales and operational disruption.[15]

There has been a significant response from trade union movements to the calls by Palestinian unions to halt all sales and funding of arms to the Israeli regime, though this has varied across European countries. In Belgium, transportation unions have opposed the transport of weapons, calling on their members to refuse the handling of military equipment being sent to the Israeli regime, while the Swedish Dockworkers Union announced a blockade against all military trade during the ongoing genocide. In Spain, Italy, Greece and France dockworkers blocked the loading and shipping of weapons and cargo shipments bound for the Israeli regime.[16] In contrast, German trade unions maintain close institutional ties with the Israeli regime, although segments of their membership have initiated bottom-up mobilization to contest German complicity, by advocating for an arms embargo and solidarity with Palestine.[17]

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15 Brown, Rivkah. "After Years of Campaigning Against an Israeli Weapons Factory, It Was Direct Action That Shut It Down." *Progressive International*, January 16, 2024. https://progressive.international/wire/2024-01-16-after-years-of-campaigning-against-an-israeli-weapons-factory-it-was-direct-action-that-shut-it-down/en/.

16 Business and Human Rights Centre. "In Response to Palestinian Trade Unions' Call: Workers and Trade Unionists Disrupt Manufacturing and Handling of Israel-Linked Arms and Military Equipment; Incl. Co. Comments." *Business and Human Rights Centre*, July 11, 2025. https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/workers-and-trade-unionists-disrupt-manufacturing-and-handling-of-israel-linked-arms-and-military-equipment/.

17 Rippert, Ulrich. "German Trade Unions Support Israel's Genocide in Gaza." *World Socialist Web Site*, November 13, 2023. https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2023/11/14/wgss-n14.html.

In several European states, Palestinian and international human rights organizations filed lawsuits and petitions to prevent arms exports, hold political leaders accountable for aiding and abetting genocide, or prosecuting European citizens who have committed war crimes or crimes against humanity in Palestine[18]. In July 2025 a Belgian court mandated the region of Flanders to block a shipment and all transit of military equipment and dual-use goods to the Israeli regime via the Port of Antwerp, citing systematic failures to enforce international humanitarian law and its own 2009 arms embargo.[19] In France, judges issued an arrest warrant for two French-Israeli nationals accused of blocking humanitarian aid to Gaza during famine, on charges of genocide, direct incitement to genocide, and complicity in crimes against humanity.[20]

Boycott, divestment and sanctions

By targeting corporations, financial institutions, universities, cultural institutions, and public bodies complicit in the Israeli regime's crimes, BDS campaigns have sought to increase both the material and reputational costs of maintaining such ties. Next to actions pushing for individual consumer boycott, the movement urged banks, local councils, churches, pension funds, and universities to withdraw investments from the Israeli colonial-apartheid regime as well as complicit institutions and cooperations. Due to pressure from the BDS movement some major Northern European pension and sovereign wealth funds

18 Al-Haq. "Al-Haq Takes Legal Action Against President Macron's Decision to Allow Israeli Arms Producers Operate at Milipol: Facilitating Israeli Armament Contributes to Genocide." *Al-Haq*, January 15, 2026. https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/27238.htm l.

19 BDS National Committee. "Belgian Court Rules against Further Transit of All Military Equipment to Israel for Its Ongoing Genocide against Palestinians in Gaza." *BDS Movement*, July 18, 2025. https://bdsmovement.net/news/belgian-court-rules-against-transit-military-equipment.

20 Gjevori, Elis. "France Issues Arrest Warrants for French-Israeli Women Accused of Inciting Genocide." *Middle East Eye*, February 3, 2026. https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/france-issues-arrest-warrants-french-israeli-women-over-gaza-aid-blockade-genocide-incitement.

divested from Israeli companies, banks and bonds citing human rights violations and ethical concerns. For instance, the Danish pension fund AkademikerPension announced the complete exclusion of the Israeli regime from its investment portfolio in September 2025.[21]

The different forms of solidarity actions have varied in their ability to challenge the complicity structures sustaining the Israeli settler-colonial regime. While mass demonstrations, educational initiatives, and cultural interventions have been important for building political consciousness, shifting public opinion, and transforming dominant narratives on Palestine, they have generally exerted limited direct pressure on the institutions materially benefiting and enabling Israeli genocide and other crimes. In contrast, labor actions, direct interventions against military infrastructure, and BDS campaigns have proven to be effective in disrupting the economic, political, and logistical networks, generating tangible costs for corporations and institutions involved in sustaining the Israeli regime.

21 BDS National Committee. "BDS Is Unstoppable: Recent Important Divestment Wins in Europe." *BDS Movement*, October 4, 2025. https://bdsmovement.net/news/bds-unstoppable-recent-important-divestment-wins-europe.

Section II:
European states' inaction and complicity: Pacification and Avoidance

The achievements of the Palestine solidarity movement have not only exposed the Israeli regime's crimes but also the political, economic, and military structures through which most European states remain complicit in the ongoing genocide and colonization of Palestine. Despite mounting pressure, European governments, with few exceptions such as Spain, Belgium, Ireland, and Slovenia until recently, have not only refused to impose sanctions against the Israeli regime, but, as will be shown, continue to be complicit in its crimes through economic, cultural, scientific and military cooperation and the repression of movements demanding accountability and liberation.

Business as usual amid genocide

The European Union (EU) and its member states remain one of the most important trading partners of the Israeli regime, with more than 34% of imports coming from the EU, and 28.8% of Israeli exports going to the EU in 2024.[22] That year, in which more than 20,000 Palestinians were killed in the genocidal assaults, the total value of trade in goods between the EU and the Israeli regime amounted to 42.6 billion Euros.[23] Despite pressure from civil society and calls from several member states, including Spain, Belgium, Ireland, and Slovenia, the EU has

22 European Citizens' Initiative. "Demand the Full Suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement in View of Israel's Violations of Human Rights." 2026. https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/initiatives/details/2025/000005_en.

23 European Commission. "EU Trade Relations with Israel." *EC Directorate-General for Trade and Economic Security*, 2026. https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/israel_en.

failed to sever the EU- Israel Association Agreement with the Israeli regime, which provides the legal and institutional framework for the political and economic partnership. A full suspension of the Agreement would require a unanimous decision from all member states, whereas suspending the trade arrangement can be achieved through a qualified majority vote, namely support from 55% of member states (15 out of 27) representing 65% of the EU's population.

Given their population size, Italy and Germany played a decisive role in blocking the proposal to suspend the trade agreement in April 2026[24]. The only measure EU member states agreed on was the sanctioning of individuals and entities involved in colonizers' attacks in the West Bank.[25] Though an important step towards accountability, focusing on individuals and entities disregards the structure of colonialism and apartheid and enablement of colonizer attacks by Israeli political leadership. In light of the European Union's inaction, Belgium, Ireland, Slovenia, Spain and the Netherlands have enacted or advanced national legislation to ban the import of goods produced in Israeli colonies in the West Bank. However, most of these measures focus exclusively on goods in colonies and do not extend to services and therefore cover only a marginal share of trade between the EU and the Israeli regime. Because these measures target only goods produced in the colonies in the West Bank, they not only impose minimal economic costs but also leave the overarching economic structures of the Israeli regime and Europe's complicity largely intact.

The EU's failure to act comes despite three formal reviews that found strong indications of the Israeli regime's breach of the human rights

24 Amnesty International. "Red Lines Not Red Carpets: Why Italy & Germany Must Support Suspending EU-Israel Agreement." Amnesty International, May 11, 2026. https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2026/05/eu-israel-trade-agreement/.

25 Council of the EU. "Extremist Israeli Settlers: EU Lists Four Entities and Three Individuals." Press release. May 28, 2026. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/05/28/extremist-israeli-settlers-eu-lists-four-entities-and-three-individuals/.

clause contained in Article 2 of the EU–Israel Association Agreement[26]. In addition, as parties to the Genocide Convention and the Geneva Conventions, all EU member states are collectively and/or individually obliged to prevent genocide and to sever trade relations that otherwise sustain an unlawful situation under humanitarian law.

Europe's military complicity

Despite public announcements by several European governments to suspend weapons exports, these measures were mainly symbolic concessions to public pressure, while substantive military support continued. Slovenia was first to impose a weapons embargo banning the export, import, and transit of military goods to and from the Israeli regime. Spain followed with announcing an embargo in September 2025, permanently banning the import, export and transit of weapons, dual-use technology, military equipment and fuel. However, as the law allows for a number of exceptions, it barely affects arms relations between Spain and the Israeli regime. Already in December 2025, the Council of Ministers approved the first exemption from the ban on transfers of defense equipment and dual-use goods destined for or originating from the Israeli regime[27]. Similarly, other countries mostly stopped, paused or restricted new arms export licenses, whilst, still allowing arms exports under permits issued before the genocide.[28] In fact, many European countries increased their weapons exports to (and imports from) the Israeli regime during the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

26 Euro-Med Human RightsMonitor. "European Stance Fuels Genocide in Gaza and Perpetuates Illegal Occupation of Palestinian Territory." Press Release. *Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor*, July 16, 2025. https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6790/European-stance-fuels-genocide-in-Gaza-and-perpetuates-illegal-occupation-of-Palestinian-territory .

27 Melero, Eduardo. *Opacidad y desinformación en las relaciones armamentistas entre España e Israel*. Working Paper, Centre Delàs d'Estudis per la Pau, 2026. https://centredelas.org/publicacions/opacidad-y-desinformacion-en-las-relaciones-armamentistas-entre-espana-e-israel/?lang=es.

28 Barnes, Timothy. "Is Europe Turning Its Back on Arming Israel?" Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), October 16, 2025. https://aoav.org.uk/2025/is-europe-turning-its-back-on-arming-israel/.

Germany, Europe's largest arms supplier to the Israeli regime, granted arms export licenses worth a total of 485 million Euros between 7 October 2023 and 13 May 2025, compared with 32 million in 2022.[29] Although the government announced a pause of new licensing due to mounting public pressure in August 2025, it ended the suspension in November citing the fake ceasefire as a reason why the ban could be lifted. In the last months of 2025 alone, the German government again granted licenses for export of military equipment to the Israeli regime worth 103,804,460.[30] Similarly, France's arms exports to the Israeli regime reached a record of 27.1 million Euros in 2024, the highest amount since 2017[31].

Although Italy halted new export licenses to the Israeli regime in 2024, it continued exports under previous licenses, amounting to 4.2 Million Euros that year.[32] Moreover, according to figures from the Italian Trade Agency (ITA) in Tel Aviv, Italian imports of arms and ammunition from the Israeli regime rose from 16.56 million Euros in 2023 to over 72 million Euros in 2025, representing a 335.65% increase.[33] Rather than marking a substantive break in military relations, these restrictions functioned largely as symbolic concessions to public pressure, while

29 Deutscher Bundestag. *Deutsche Waffenlieferungen an Israel Und Die Folgen Für Die Bevölkerung in Gaza*. Antwort Der Bundesregierung Drucksache 21/284. Berlin, 2025. https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/21/002/2100284.pdf.

30 Deutscher Bundestag. *Waffenexporte Nach Israel Im Ersten Quartal 2026*. Aon,ntwort Der Bundesregierung Drucksache 21/5906. Berlin, 2026. https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/21/059/2105906.pdf.

31 Ministère Des ArméesDES ARMÉES. *Rapport Au Parlement 2025 Sur Les Exportations d'armement de La France*. No. ARMM2522716X. Ministère Des Armées, 2025. https://linsoumission.fr/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Rapport-au-parlement-2025-sur-les-exportations-darmement-de-la-france.pdf.

32 Rete Italiana Pace e Disarmo. "More and More Italian Arms Abroad: Licenses for Export Went over 7,6 Billion in 2024." *Italian Network for Peace and Disarmament*, April 10, 2025. https://retepacedisarmo.org/english/2025/more-and-more-italian-arms-abroad-licenses-for-export-went-over-7-6-billion-in-2024/.

33 Bechis, Franco. "Nel 2025 l'Italia ha aumentato le importazioni da Israele. Balzo record negli acquisti di armi e munizioni di Tel Aviv, quadruplicati in un biennio. La Spagna di Sanchez invece esporta di più." Open, May 21, 2026. https://www.open.online/2026/05/21/italia-armi-israele-commercio-importazioni-export/.

masking the continuation and, in many cases, escalation of European states' military support for the Israeli regime.

Symbolic recognition

Alongside performative restrictions on arms transfers, the recognition of Palestine as a state emerged as another instrument for European states to signal action while avoiding substantive accountability measures and structural change. While presented as support for Palestinian autonomy, these recognitions largely served to uphold the illusion of an imposed two-state solution, while avoiding their obligations to enforce sanctions against the Israeli regime. This is not only a purely symbolic action with no material consequences; it also shifts attention away from the root causes (Israeli colonial domination and ongoing crimes) and from Palestinian sovereignty and the inalienable rights to self-determination and return. By confining Palestinian self-determination to only part of the Palestinian people and territory, such recognition violates the Palestinian people's inalienable rights to return and self-determination by preventing return to original homes in 1948 Palestine.

Further, it legitimizes the fragmentation and enclavement of Palestinian land and people[34] and, by refusing the right of return, violates UN Resolution 194 [35] and refugee law[36], whilst also advancing a logic of pacification by conditioning recognition on disarmament of the resistance.

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34 BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights. *The Israeli Apartheid Spatial Regime: Fragmentation and Enclavement of Palestine*. Working Paper No. 33: BADIL, 2026. https://badil.org/cached_uploads/view/2026/03/30/wp33-fragmentation-and-enclavement-of-palestine-1774864495.pdf.

35 United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 194, A/RES/194 (III), December 11, 1948, https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/194(iii).

36 United Nations. *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*. UN Doc. A/RES/71/1. New York, NY: UN Headquarters, 2016, https://www.unhcr.org/media/new-york-declaration-refugees-and-migrants-0.

This preference for symbolic gestures is also reflected in limited European participation in coordinated international efforts to end the genocide. No European country is a member of The Hague Group, a global bloc of states chaired by Colombia and South Africa that is committed to coordinated legal and diplomatic measures in defense of international law and solidarity with the Palestinian people. Although Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and Slovenia participated in meetings and conferences organized by the group, none formally endorsed its positions, statements, or measures.[37]

With regard to international legal mechanisms, official European responses and actions remain equally fragmented. While Belgium, the Netherlands, Iceland, Ireland, and Spain are among the European countries that formally joined South Africa's genocide case against the Israeli regime at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Hungary filed a declaration of intervention supporting the regime[38]. Germany was first to announce its intervention in support of the Israeli regime, yet decided not to formally intervene, citing its own case brought by Nicaragua regarding its complicity in the Israeli genocide[39].

Repression and criminalization of the solidarity movements

At home, many European governments responded with measures to repress, criminalize and silence the movement that challenged Europe´s complicity in the genocide. According to the Civic Space

37 Hind Rajab Foundation. Legal Explainer: What Is The Hague Group, and Why the Hind Rajab Foundation's Participation Matters. July 16, 2025. https://www.hindrajabfoundation.org/posts/legal-explainer-what-is-the-hague-group-and-why-the-hind-rajab-foundations-participation-matters.

38 International Court of Justice. "Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel) - Intervention." 2026. https://www.icj-cij.org/case/192/intervention.

39 Auswärtiges Amt. "Klage vor dem Internationalen Gerichtshof wegen eines möglichen Verstoßes Israels gegen die Völkermordkonvention", Erklärungen des Auswärtigen Amts in der Regierungspressekonferenz, March 18, 2026. https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/regierungspressekonferenz-2760384.

Report 2025 by the European Civic Forum, civic freedoms in the EU have deteriorated over the past years, with at least 12 member states (including Germany, France, and Italy) taking disproportionate measures to ban protests in solidarity with Palestine on vague grounds of "national security," "counter terrorism," and "public order."[40] For instance, the organizations Samidoun-Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network in Germany and Palestine Action in the UK have been proscribed as terrorist organizations under anti-terrorism legislation, while in France, the "apology for terrorism" law has been widely used to criminalize pro-Palestine speech. In 2025, the German parliament adopted an "antisemitism resolution" that expands surveillance and punitive measures against students and academics, suppresses Palestine advocacy in schools and universities, all under the guise of combating antisemitism. Hence, weaponizing counter-terrorism frameworks and the fight against antisemitism to repress solidarity with the Palestinian people and struggle, became part of a growing trend of shrinking spaces in Europe.[41] The colonial domination of the Palestinian people and the repression of Palestine solidarity are not the same, but are connected. While Palestinians face land theft, forced displacement, apartheid, and genocide, governments and institutions across Europe increasingly respond to solidarity with surveillance, censorship, and criminalization. By suppressing movements for Palestinian liberation and accountability, these measures shield the Israeli regime and sustain colonial domination.

Overall, European state responses demonstrate a continuum of colonial complicity, despite some differences among states. While Germany, Italy, France, and the United Kingdom are investing heavily and increasingly in sustaining the Israeli settler-colonial regime, other

40 European Civic Forum. *Civic Space Report*. European Civic Forum, 2024. https://civic-forum.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Civic-Space-Report-2024_ECF.pdf.

41 FIDH. *Solidarity as a Crime: Voices for Palestine Under Fire*. N° 846a. FIDH International Federation for Human Rights, 2026. https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/fidh_report_on_palestinian_solidarity_under_fire.pdf.

countries such as Spain, Ireland, Belgium, and Slovenia have made symbolic concessions without, however, fundamentally breaking with the European structure of complicity.

Section III:
Lessons learned and way forward

The growth of the Palestine solidarity movement across Europe has exposed the central role of European states and institutions in sustaining the Israeli colonial-apartheid regime and in enabling its crimes. While the international solidarity movement has achieved important gains, it did not yet produce a broader rupture in European states´ political, economic, and military relations with the Israeli regime. States' complicity increased rather than decreased over time. This persistence despite unprecedented public mobilization highlights that European complicity is rooted in broader structures of colonial relations and imperial interest. Yet, despite deepening their political, economic, and military relations with the Israeli regime, European governments are increasingly incurring political costs, as growing public opposition to their stance on Palestine not only fuels social mobilization but also threatens to erode electoral support for governing parties.

Although the Israeli regime and Europe´s complicity have to be confronted with a variety of actions, a focus on symbolic, and often performative measures, or on demands that endorse externally imposed political frameworks—such as the two-state solution, Trump's 20-point plan, or UNSC Resolution 2803— depoliticizes the movement.[42] These approaches manage, entrench, and legitimize Israeli crimes. **The focus therefore must be on the imposition of sanctions** - not only against individual perpetrators but **against the Israeli regime as a whole**. Liberation and justice is only achievable when the sanctions imposed dismantle the structures/institutions of oppression, subjugation and domination. In light of the ongoing genocide in Gaza, the escalation of colonial expansion in the West Bank, and the continuous and escalating complicity of European

42 BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights. *UN Security Council Resolution 2803: International Governance as a Tool of Israeli Colonial Domination in Gaza*. Press Release. 2025. https://badil.org/press-releases/16411.html.

states, it becomes clear that mobilizing the masses and raising public consciousness about ongoing Israeli crimes, Palestinian rights, and a decolonial solution have not resulted in a significant rupture of the global structures of oppression and subjugation of the Palestinian people and others. While the efforts, commitment and sacrifices of the global solidarity movement for Palestine have been significant and should not be minimized, honest discussions, self-evaluation and strategic thinking must occur to impose continuous and effective pressure on European states to fulfill their obligations and end their complicity through the imposition of the full spectrum of sanctions. Historically, governments and states have not yielded to public pressure and demands unless they were provided with no other choice; that the pressure imposed by civil society could no longer be ignored. States' policies change when it becomes materially unsustainable to continue perpetrating and eabling crimes. Therefore, actions that **disrupt the status quo and/or generate material costs**, such as coordinated labor strikes and blockades targeting arms production and shipment as well as direct action against companies complicit in the crimes are the most effective. These actions must continue to be accompanied by the intensification and sharpening of all other forms of genuine (not symbolic or performative) solidarity actions.

Solidarity movements with Palestine in every country must explore and understand the specific circumstances of their location/country, the formation of the government, the nature and characteristics (structure) of the relationship with the Israeli Zionist regime, and what is required to bring about real change. They must develop mechanisms to transform their solidarity activities, campaign and direct actions into political achievements that could be built on.

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns have mobilized masses for consumer boycott, and are also generating more and more pressure for institutional divestment. Particularly, campaigns targeting

pension funds and insurance companies have led to substantial divestments from Israeli state bonds and complicit companies[43], while student movements exposed financial and institutional ties among academic institutions[44]. Similarly, campaigns to revoke the charitable status of Zionist and Israeli regime-linked organizations based in Europe would not only eliminate taxpayer subsidies but also create legal precedent to hold them accountable for their engagement in war crimes.

Continued mapping of sites and actors of economic, academic, and military complicity within specific European countries can help to **intensify efforts toward divestment through coordinated campaigns.** On the European level, joint actions and transnational organizing is needed to confront structural complicity of the EU with the Israeli regime's crimes and pressure for economic and military embargoes and sanctions. While non-binding, the European Citizens' Initiative[45] demanding a suspension of the Association Agreement gathered more than 1 million signatures, obliging the European Commission to consider the matter and issue a reasoned opinion. The growth of the popular movement for Palestine over the last years has helped build the collective power necessary to **advance demands for sanctions** against the Israeli colonial-apartheid regime, measures that states are legally obliged to impose under international law.

Finally, the movement has been most effective where it was able to **build alliances with social justice movements (labor, feminist, anti-racist, ecological, etc.) and other decolonial and liberation**

43 BDS National Committee. "BDS Is Unstoppable: Recent Important Divestment Wins in Europe." *BDS Movement*, October 4, 2025. https://bdsmovement.net/news/bds-unstoppable-recent-important-divestment-wins-europe.

44 See for example: Academic Complicity. "Mapping Institutional Ties with Israel across Europe!" *Academic Complicity*, 2026. https://academiccomplicity.eu/.

45 European Citizens' Initiative. "Demand the Full Suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement in View of Israel's Violations of Human Rights." 2026. https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/initiatives/details/2025/000005_en.

struggles, recognizing Palestine as part of a wider fight against colonial domination and global systems of exploitation. For example, in Italy, the labor union´s mobilization not only disrupted the flow of military goods and logistical infrastructures linked to the Israeli regime, but also exercised broader forms of social and economic power through general strikes that halted transportation, schools, and businesses across the country[46]. Alliances with Indigenous movements have foregrounded common experiences of settler colonialism, land dispossession, and resistance, while connections with migrant justice organizations have drawn attention to the links between European border regimes, surveillance technologies, and colonial systems of exclusion. Hence, coalition-building and transnational campaigns can help to consolidate collective power, strengthen resistance, and expand the capacity for sustained disruption against interconnected structures of domination. **To be impactful, alliances have to move beyond statements of solidarity by identifying common targets, coordinating campaigns, and linking Palestine to broader struggles against colonialism, racism, militarism, and economic and ecological exploitation.**

46 Peoples Dispatch. "Workers Shut down Italy Again in Solidarity with Palestine." *Peoples Dispatch*, October 3, 2025. https://peoplesdispatch.org/2025/10/03/workers-shut-down-italy-again-in-solidarity-with-palestine/.

> **For the Palestinian Solidarity Movement to be impactful, it has to move beyond statements of solidarity by identifying common targets, coordinating campaigns, and linking Palestine to broader struggles against colonialism, racism, militarism, and economic and ecological exploitation.**