

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001333/26
to the Commission
Konstantinos Arvanitis (The Left)
(31 March 2026)**

Subject: Israel: death penalty and racial discrimination

On 30 March 2026, the Israeli Parliament adopted a law imposing the death penalty by hanging on anyone intentionally causing the death of a person, with the aim of harming an Israeli citizen or resident and with the intent of putting an end to the existence of the State of Israel.

The condition of 'denying the existence of the State of Israel' effectively excludes the vast majority of Jews and renders the law a de facto instrument of unacceptable and targeted racial discrimination against Palestinians, as was also evident from public statements by government officials during the legislative process.

This led Israel's Association for Civil Rights to lodge an appeal with the Supreme Court, citing 'deliberate discrimination'. A number of European states have also formally condemned the law. The EU ⁽¹⁾, the Council of Europe ⁽²⁾, the UN ⁽³⁾ and a number of international civil society organisations have also expressed strong condemnation.

In light of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. What immediate tangible steps does it intend to take in relation to this issue?
2. Will the European Union continue to fund a non-EU state that grossly, repeatedly and demonstrably violates its own fundamental principles and values?

Submitted: 31.3.2026

**Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(22 June 2026)**

The EU's position on the death penalty is clear and longstanding: it opposes capital punishment in all cases and under all circumstances. Israel had long upheld a de facto moratorium on both executions and capital punishment sentencing, thereby leading by example in the region despite a complex security environment.

The recent approval of the Death Penalty Bill by the Israeli Parliament marks a grave regression from that practice and from Israel's own commitments.

The EU is deeply concerned about the de facto discriminatory character of the Bill, and it is understood that the law is now challenged in the Supreme Court.

Consistent with the global efforts towards universal abolition of the death penalty, the EU urges Israel to abide by its previous principled position and with its obligations under international law, as well as its commitment to democratic principles, as reflected also in the provisions of the EU-Israel Association Agreement ⁽¹⁾.

The EU position has been clearly reflected in the statement issued on 31 March 2026 by the High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) on behalf of the EU ⁽²⁾. The HR/VP has also raised the issue with the Israeli Foreign Minister.

In September 2025, after a majority of Member States backed a review that identified potential violations by Israel of its Article 2 obligations under the EU-Israel Association Agreement, the President of the Commission announced a series of measures in the 2025 State of the Union address.

¹ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israel-statement-spokesperson-death-penalty-bill_en Opposes capital punishment in all cases and under all circumstances. [...] a violation of the right to life [...] also has no proven deterrent effect and renders any judicial errors irreversible [...] a grave step backward [...] encourages Israel to abide [...] with its obligations under international law [...] as reflected also in the provisions of the EU-Israel Association Agreement.

² <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/secretary-general-alain-berset-deplores-serious-setback-following-passing-of-law-expanding-use-of-death-penalty-in-israel> A grave step backwards incompatible with contemporary human rights standards. [...] any application that could be characterised as discriminatory is unacceptable. It will examine its implications for the conventions [...] and cooperation mechanisms in which it participates.

³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/03/israel-turk-warns-against-legislative-steps-targeting-palestinians-violation> it further consolidates Israel's violation of the prohibition of racial segregation and apartheid, as it will only apply to Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Israel, who are often convicted following unfair trials.

⁽¹⁾ https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/israel_en.

⁽²⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/03/31/israel-statement-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union-on-the-approval-of-the-death-penalty-bill-by-the-israeli-parliament/>.

As result, the Commission has suspended most bilateral funding to Israel, except for funding to civil society and Yad Vashem. Additional measures, requiring approval from Member States, are now under discussion in the Council.
