

(English version)

Question for written answer E-001377/26
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Kostas Papadakis (NI), Lefteris Nikolaou-Alavanos (NI)
(3 April 2026)

Subject: State of Israel introduces death penalty for Palestinians

The Israeli Parliament (the Knesset) has passed a law authorising the death penalty for Palestinians convicted of committing ‘terrorist attacks’ by military tribunals. This includes, amongst others, Palestinians who have been arbitrarily held in prisons for years by Israel, without even having been charged, under the unacceptable regime of ‘administrative detention’. This appalling law represents a new escalation in Israel’s criminal policy perpetuating the genocide against Palestinians.

For years, the EU and the European Parliament have systematically instrumentalised the issue of the ‘death penalty’ vis-à-vis countries that have competing interests with the EU, posing as a ‘human rights defender’ in order to advance the EU’s strategy, but when it comes to the imposition of similarly inhumane laws by their own allies — such as the monarchical regime in Saudi Arabia or the State of Israel — they limit themselves to expressing hollow concerns, thus applying a double standard.

In the light of the above, what is the High Representative/Vice-President of the EU’s position on:

1. the egregious law adopted by the Knesset that sets out the death penalty for Palestinians who resist the genocide committed by the State of Israel?
2. the calls for an immediate end to the EU-Israel Association Agreement and for an immediate embargo on the sale of arms and dual-use goods by EU Member States to Israel, which adopted this despicable law?

Submitted: 3.4.2026

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

The EU has a principled position against the death penalty in all cases and in all circumstances.

The approval of the Death Penalty Bill by the Israeli Parliament marks a grave regression from its long-upheld moratorium and from its own commitments.

The EU is deeply concerned about the de facto discriminatory character of the Bill ⁽¹⁾. Consistent with the EU’s 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 ⁽²⁾.

The Association Agreement governs EU-Israel relations, including mechanisms to address concerns. In 2024, the High Representative/Vice-President found that Israel would be in breach of Article 2 (human rights clause).

On 17 September 2025, the Commission proposed: suspending the trade-related provisions of the Agreement, new sanctions on Hamas, extremist Israeli ministers and violent settlers, putting on hold bilateral EU funding to Israel (excluding civil society, antisemitism programmes and Yad Vashem).

Suspension of the entire Agreement requires unanimous approval from all 27 Member States. On 11 May 2026, EU Foreign Ministers reached a political agreement on a further package of sanctions against extremist settlers and against entities and organisations that support them. Discussions continue in the Council.

Arms exports to third countries are controlled by Member States. Therefore, the competent authorities of Member States are in charge for taking the final decision whether to authorise or deny an individual export or transit licence of military equipment.

⁽¹⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israel-statement-spokesperson-death-penalty-bill_en.

⁽²⁾ https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/israel/documents/eu_israel/asso_agree_en.pdf.