

(English version)

Priority question for written answer P-002573/26
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Bert-Jan Ruissen (ECR), Cristian Terheş (ECR), Rihards Kols (ECR)
(22 June 2026)

Subject: VP/HR remarks on Israel

According to various recent news reports, including one by Euractiv ⁽¹⁾, during closed-door high-level talks in Mexico between 20 and 22 May 2026, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) compared Israel's treatment of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank to South Africa's racist apartheid era. On 18 June 2026, Israel's foreign minister Gideon Saar said that he has 'no choice but to sever all contact' because of the statements allegedly made by the VP/HR ⁽²⁾.

1. Did the VP/HR really compare Israel's treatment of Palestinians with South Africa's apartheid regime during her meetings in Mexico?
2. If so, is this the new official position of the EU, and is the VP/HR aware that this puts unnecessary pressure on the EU's relations with Israel?
3. Is the VP/HR prepared to retract her statement and offer an apology?

Submitted: 22.6.2026

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

The High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) has spoken about the situation in Israel in numerous public statements, clearly outlining the EU position, including when it comes to the importance of bilateral relations with Israel and the EU's concerns about the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The EU's official position is expressed in those remarks and in the conclusions unanimously adopted by Member States in the Council.

The HR/VP has been consistently clear about the importance of dialogue and engagement with Israel. The HR/VP has maintained frequent diplomatic engagement with Israel's Foreign Minister with whom she regularly discussed all issues of common interest and remains committed to a constructive relationship with Israel. In relations with Israel, the EU considers that political engagement and frank and open dialogue are the most effective ways to convey EU concerns.

¹ Michalopoulos, S. and Nielsen, M., 'EXCLUSIVE: Kallas' Israel 'apartheid' remarks deepen EU foreign policy crisis', *Euractiv*, 12 June 2026, <https://www.euractiv.com/news/exclusive-kallas-israel-apartheid-remarks-deepen-eu-foreign-policy-crisis/>.

² <https://x.com/gidonsaar/status/2067522787334406632>.