

## Statements from the International Community on Prospective Annexation: May

The **European Union Foreign Affairs Council** met on May 15<sup>th</sup> to discuss responses towards annexation. Following the meeting, **EU High Representative Josep Borrell** delivered a statement in his own name, backed by 25 out of the 27 member states, excluding Hungary and Austria. The [statement](#) said: *“We strongly urge Israel to refrain from any unilateral decision that would lead to the annexation of any occupied Palestinian territory and would be, as such, contrary to International Law.”* He reiterated that resolution to the conflict *“remains a priority”* and that the EU’s efforts for time being is *“devoted to the diplomatic action.”*

Some European countries are appearing to push for a harsher stance and have expressed support for threats of punitive action. This includes **France, Ireland, Sweden, Belgium, Spain** and **Luxembourg**. An options paper detailing the various diplomatic and economic measures that the bloc could take is being drafted by the **European External Action Service**.

**Germany’s Foreign Minister Heiko Mass** and **PA Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh** delivered a [joint statement](#) following a virtual meeting on May 19<sup>th</sup>, it says that *“annexation of any part of occupied Palestinian territories including East Jerusalem constitutes a clear violation of international law and seriously undermines the chances for the two-state solution within a final status agreement.”* It added that Germany, *“took note of the Palestinian view that such a step would put an end to all signed agreements.”*

With the formation of the new Israeli government, several European leaders have sent personal letters to Prime Minister Netanyahu urging him not to advance plans for annexation. Letters were sent from **France’s** President Emmanuel Macron, **UK’s** Prime Minister Boris Johnson, **Spanish** Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and **Italian** Premier Giuseppe Conte.

On May 20<sup>th</sup> EU members of the UN Security Council including **Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany** and **Poland** congratulated the new government but urged the resumption of *“direct and meaningful negotiations between the two parties,”* and noted *“with grave concern”* the moves towards annexation. During the session **UN’s Middle East envoy Mladenov** issued a [warning](#) against unilateral annexation and said that all sides must do their part in the coming weeks to preserve the prospect of the two-state solution.

Representatives of the **Quartet (EU, UN, US and Russia)** met on May 22<sup>nd</sup> to discuss the latest developments and discussed ways to restore the peace process. There appear to have been no tangible conclusions or proposed action from the meeting.

The **Czech Republic’s FM Petricek**, together with two previous FM’s wrote a joint opinion piece published in *Pravo* daily that raised serious questions and concerns over the prospect of annexation vis-à-vis international law and conceptions of democracy. **PM Babis** distanced himself from the piece and described it as a *“denial of current foreign policy.”*

Other statements/measures have included:

- **UK House of Lords**, International Relations Committee [wrote a letter](#) to Foreign Office’s Minister James Cleverly, asking the government to clarify its position on Israel’s preferential access to UK markets

- The **Dutch Labor party** issued a [statement](#) calling for the imposition of sanctions if annexation takes place
- **70 Italian parliamentarians** from the coalition parties wrote a [letter](#) urging PM Conte to condemn annexation and to actively work to avert its realization before July 1st

**Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov** congratulated Israel's new FM Ashkenazi (alongside various other world leaders) on assuming the post and expressed Moscow's opposition to Israel's annexation plans. Russia has said it is pushing for a future meeting of the Quartet together with Arab countries.

**Jordan's King Abdullah II** continues to issue stern warnings and in an [interview](#) with *Der Spiegel*, said that such action could lead to *"massive conflict between Israel and Jordan"* and said he was "considering all options" that includes possibly annulling the peace agreement. Doubling down on this position, **Prime Minister Omar Razzaz** said that will be a reconsideration of the relationship with Israel "in all its dimension." **Foreign Minister, Ayman Safadi** has urged his counterparts in several countries to dissuade Israel from annexation. Recently, he urged **UK FM Dominic Raab** to "safeguard peace and prevent Israel from moving forward with annexation. He also spoke with **US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo** and spoke of the *"unprecedented threat."*

**Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry** delivered a lukewarm [statement](#) that rejects unilateral moves and violations of UN Security Council resolutions. The statement emphasized the, *"Kingdom's steadfast stance toward the brotherly Palestinian people, and support for its choices, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital."*

**The United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister, Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan** [said](#) that *"this unilateral step is illegal, undermines chances for peace and contradicts all efforts made by the international community to reach a lasting political solution in accordance with relevant international resolutions."* Meanwhile, the first publically known direct commercial flight from Abu Dhabi to Israel was made without coordination with the Palestinians, indicating a willingness to normalize relations despite Israeli steps towards annexation.