

24.09.2019

Dear Commission President Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker, dear Commissioner Ms. Jourova,

It has come to our attention that the Israeli Minister of Public Security, and Minister of Strategic Affairs and Public Diplomacy Gilad Erdan of the Likud party will be attending an event at the European Parliament, with participation by EU Commission coordinator on Combating Antisemitism Katarina von Schnurbein, on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

This unfortunately indicates a concerning lack of due diligence on behalf of the event's organizers and of Ms. Von Schnurbein. Inviting Mr. Erdan, an Israeli hardliner, to a public forum involving a European Commission coordinator puts European politicians, officials and civil society actors at risk and violates the obligation of EU officials to maintain the safety and security of their co-workers and interests abroad. Ms. Von Schnurbein mandate is to protect European Jewish communities from harm. By participating in this event, she panders instead to Israeli right-wing interests that directly conflict with the safety and prosperity of Jewish communities in Europe, including our own.

As the minister responsible for the Israeli Police, Mr. Erdan is holding ministerial responsibility for several extra-judicial police killings and discriminatory policies, both in occupied east Jerusalem and within Israel. On his additional capacity as the Minister of Strategic Affairs and Public Diplomacy, Mr. Erdan has been involved in publishing a report titled "The Money Trail: European Union Financing of Organizations Promoting Boycotts against the State of Israel" in January 2019 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). The report is signed only by the ministry, and therefore should be seen as representing Mr. Erdan's political position.

This report is 34 pages of incitement against a series of civil society organizations, against the individual workers (including Jewish Europeans) and management in those organizations and against the EU bodies who provide financing to these organizations. Without fail, the organizations mentioned in the report are human rights organizations and organizations promoting the implementation of international law and the protection of minority groups. Despite this, the report attempts to make connections between these organizations, and the EU bodies which finance them, and terror organizations. It should be recalled that according to Mr. Erdan, alleged association with terrorism is grounds for the use of lethal force.

Incitement which includes a clear call for the use of violence, based on racial and religious hatred, is prohibited under European law. Until Mr. Erdan withdraws the report and issues a

public and official apology, inviting him to speak in a European forum could be considered complicity with a hate crime.

We are especially concerned that EU Commission coordinator to Combat Antisemitism Katarina von Schnurbein considers attending the event. Ms. Von Schnurbein has a responsibility to protect European Jews from hate crimes, and this includes their right to freedom of speech, and to support the civil society organizations in Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which Mr. Erdan associates with terrorism.

Should Ms. Von Schnurbein choose to attend the event, European Jewish progressive organizations will be subjected to additional risk, and possible harm, in their exercise of their freedom of expression and belief. In the case that her participation in this event goes ahead, the undersigned organizations will address, in a separate letter, both the current and incoming EU Commissioner for Justice requesting a transfer of Ms. Von Schnurbein from her current post.

With regards,

The undersigned Jewish European organizations:

Een Andere Joodse Stem (Belgium)

Union Juive Française pour la Paix (France)

Jews for Justice for Palestinians (UK)

Jüdische Stimme für gerechter Frieden in Nahost (Germany)

Judar för Israelisk Palestinsk Fred (Sweden)

Free Speech on Israel (UK)