

What Will Europe Do If Israel-Iran Options Fail?

As Israel once again begins firing retaliatory missiles into Gaza, the European Coalition for Israel, or ECI, is calling on the European Parliament to take a stand for Israel.

The ECI wants the European Union to support Israel's right to defend itself "and the Jewish people" against Iran using all means necessary if diplomacy fails, if sanctions don't work, if nothing else works, and if Iran is about to get nuclear weapons.

ECI Director Tomas Sandell issued the call on Thursday during a joint session of the European Parliament delegation to the Knesset and its Knesset counterpart.

"There is a new Hitler rising. He lives in Iran, and he speaks Farsi," Sandell said. "His objectives are the same as Hitler's, to kill 6 million Jews. History will not forgive us if we fail to stop him in time."

A nuclear threat from Iran was one of the main topics during a two-day visit of the Israeli Knesset delegation to the EU under the chairmanship of Kadima MK Nachman Shai. In his speech, Shai assured the Members of European Parliament that good relations with Europe are vital for Israel. Shai wants to see more, not less, cooperation, and asked the EU to lift any restrictions to closer cooperation with Israel.

As it stands, the EU will only ratify a promised trade agreement upgrade with Israel on the condition that there is a breakthrough in the Middle East peace process. According to the ECI, many MEPs have asked for the upgraded agreement to be implemented regardless so that Israel is not punished if the Palestinians do not enter negotiations. However, European Commission Director Tomas Dupla del Moral defended the

official EU view. His speech demanded a complete freeze of all Israeli settlements.

The Israeli members of the Knesset delegation pointed out that no progress was made during the 10 months during which the freeze was in place and that building new settlements has never before hindered negotiations.

Building new homes can hardly be the biggest challenge to peace, Sandell said. A final settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians needs to be based on historical facts and international law. This means that we cannot accept historical falsifications and distortions of truth like the recent decision by UNESCO to classify Rachel's tomb as a mosque."

As Sandell sees it, any peace agreement needs to be based on the legal rights of Israel as codified in international law by the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers in San Remo in 1920. The International legal framework of the San Remo resolution, the Mandate for Palestine and the Treaty of Lausanne comprises the original foundation of the Jewish people's rights under international law.

There can be no unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state but only a negotiated solution between the Israelis and the Palestinians, Sandell stressed. The EU needs to stay committed to this principle and can under no circumstances impose or threaten to impose a forced solution or a unilateral declaration.