

September 12, 2025

Mr Micheál Martin TD,  
An Taoiseach,  
Government Buildings,  
Merrion Street,  
Dublin 2.

By email to: [taoiseach@taoiseach.gov.ie](mailto:taoiseach@taoiseach.gov.ie)

**Re Urgent need to sanction Israel**

Dear Taoiseach,

This week marks the UN General Assembly deadline for Israel to end its illegal occupation and apartheid. Israel has not only utterly failed to end the occupation, it has in fact escalated its depraved genocidal violence in Gaza, including against UN staff and facilities, and dramatically increased land theft, settlement expansion, and attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank.

The official number (and most likely huge under-estimate) of Palestinians killed in Gaza since 7th October 2023 stands at around 64,500 people. The UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) initiative has recently confirmed that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians living in northern Gaza are suffering from famine.

Congress is a longtime supporter of the BDS campaign and are now in the process of stepping up these actions in line with a motion to our Biennial Delegate Conference in Belfast in July (Link). We are declaring ourselves an apartheid free zone – reviewing all of our procurement and pension investments to ensure that we are not inadvertently complicit in Israel's horrific actions. Many affiliates have also been doing similar work.

We acknowledge that the Irish government has been to the fore in comparison to other EU countries in calling out Israeli atrocities, but clearly the government needs to do more and introduce real sanctions on Israel. These must include:

- ending all trade - both goods and services - with the illegal Israeli settlements in order to meet Ireland's obligations under international law and to play our part in ending Israel's brutal occupation of Palestinian land. We reiterate our call that you listen to the ICJ and the Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade and pass the Occupied Territories Bill without delay when the Dáil resumes in September;
- passing the Settlement Divestment Bill to ensure that no Irish taxpayers' money is invested in entities that assist or profit from the occupation;
- passing the Arms Embargo Bill that will prevent Irish airspace and airports being used to transit weapons to Apartheid Israel;
- banning the export of all dual-use items to Israel;
- a reversal of the government decision which agrees with the IHRA definition of antisemitism which falsely brands criticisms of Israeli government policy and actions as antisemitic;

- imposing a ban on the import or purchase of any Israeli weaponry, military or security items, and security or surveillance tech;
- and ensuring that the recent ending of the Central Bank facilitating the sale of Israeli war bonds remains permanent;
- demanding that the EU-Israel Association Agreement be cancelled, and ensuring that Israeli entities cannot be part of the Horizon R&D project,
- consideration should also be given to joining [The Hague Group](#), an inter-state initiative so far aimed at promoting concrete sanctions and meaningful, consequential accountability measures, and endorsing and implementing their [Bogotá Declaration](#);
- and seeking the expulsion of apartheid Israel from the UN by withdrawing its accreditation to the UN General Assembly and to push for lawful sanctions against it similar to those imposed on apartheid South Africa.

The situation we find ourselves in has become unconscionable for some trade union members worried about being exposed to complicity through handling of Israeli goods, facilitating trade with Israel or even worse the passage of arms through Irish territory. We would not be surprised if some of these develop into flashpoints of conscientious objection by some workers and trade unions will not be found wanting in protecting *their members where an employer was to seek to discipline or dismiss a worker in such circumstance*.

This situation is not tenable however and it is important that there are legal protections for such actions. Congress fully supports the Labour "Occupying Power (Securities and Handling of Settlement Goods) Bill 2025" currently in the Oireachtas and urges all party support to expedite passage of this important legislation without delay.

I look forward to your attention to this urgent matter.

Yours sincerely,



**Owen Reidy**  
**General Secretary**