

Irish Congress of Trade Unions warns that workers must not be placed in “unconscionable situations” of complicity in Israeli genocide, as UN-set deadline looms

- UN-set deadline of September 18th for end to occupation and apartheid of Palestine due this week.
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions writes to Taoiseach, calling for new measures including sanctions on Israel and end to trade in light of ongoing genocide.
- Unions warn of “flashpoints of conscientious objection” to Israeli actions.

Workers in Ireland should not be placed in “unconscionable situations” of facilitating trade with Israel or handling Israeli goods while the genocide in Palestine continues, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions has warned.

This week will see the deadline set by the UN General Assembly for Israel to end its illegal occupation and apartheid of Palestine, and in line with the Boycott, Divest, Sanction campaign, Congress is calling on the Irish Government to step up its response to the ongoing genocide by ending trade with Israel.

To date, the official number of Palestinians killed since the Israeli campaign began stands at 64,500, while the UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification initiative has confirmed that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are suffering from famine.

Congress has written to Taoiseach Micheál Martin and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer urging their respective governments to do more and introduce real sanctions on Israel. Congress and other unions are reviewing procurement and pension investments to ensure non-complicity in Israel’s horrific actions.

Commenting, Congress General Secretary Owen Reidy said,

"The Irish public is horrified by Israel's genocide in Palestine. With the UN's deadline looming, it's time for the Irish government to step up and represent the public's outrage. We saw South Africa treated as a pariah state during the apartheid era, we must now see the same for Israel.

“While Ireland has made diplomatic efforts within the EU, the failure to implement real sanctions means some trade union members fear being complicit in Israel’s violence.

“We would not be surprised if some of these develop into flashpoints of conscientious objection by some workers.

“As a movement, we are clear: we will not be found wanting in protecting our members where an employer seeks to discipline or dismiss a worker in such circumstances.”

In line with the BDS Movement, Congress is calling for:

- An end to trade with Israel the imposition of sanctions, and the passage of the Occupied Territories Bill.
- Passage of the Settlement Divestment Bill to ensure that no Irish taxpayers’ money is invested in entities that assist or profit from the occupation;
- Passage of the Occupying Power (Securities and Handling of Settlement Goods) Bill 2025

These follow a motion passage at Congress’s Biennial Delegate Conference in July, which called for an intensification of the union movement’s opposition to the Israeli genocide.

On Thursday 18th September, unions will join the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign will protest at the Dáil from 4.30pm – 6.30pm to demand that the Government end all complicity in Israel’s genocide against the Palestine people, apartheid and illegal occupation of Palestine lands.

ENDS