

STATEMENT BY IRISH QUAKERS

Ireland Yearly Meeting of the [Religious Society of Friends \(Quakers\)](#) joins with [Quakers in Britain](#) in welcoming the announcement by United Kingdom Foreign Secretary of a “new approach” towards Israeli occupation of Palestine and violations against the Palestinian people. This includes announcing a ban on the import of goods from settlements, sanctions on those providing services to settlements, and sanctions against individual extremist settlers. In very important respects, this parallels the position taken by the Irish government with the passage of the Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Prohibition of Importation of Goods) Act 2026, although we believe that this should have included services to and from the Settlements.

Ireland Yearly Meeting, representing Quakers throughout the island, welcomes these changes as a long-awaited and positive step towards a much broader reset of UK government policy. For years, successive governments have recognised that Israeli settlements in the West Bank are in contravention of international law. Years of recognition, without any meaningful action by the UK, Ireland, and other members of the international community, have come at a devastating cost. During that time, the Israeli government has deepened and expanded its settlement enterprise, entrenching a system of domination and control that has been egregious in its effects on the lives and livelihoods of generations of Palestinians.

Underpinning the debilitating and destructive actions of increasing numbers of illegal settlers is Israel’s decades-long occupation of Palestine across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza, and enactment of policies that are intended to annex the Occupied Territories and deny millions of Palestinians their fundamental rights. The International Court of Justice’s (ICJ) July 2024 Advisory Opinion made clear that the state of Israel’s occupation is unlawful and that states, including the UK and Ireland, have a legal duty not to aid or assist in its continuation.

We agree that both our governments need to extend the ban to all services and investments with Israeli settlements and end any arms transfers to the state of Israel. Other measures that should be undertaken by the UK government include suspending the UK–Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement, whose preferential terms are expressly conditioned on respect for human rights. Similarly, the Irish government should use its position of Presidency of the EU Council to continue to push for the EU to suspend the EU–Israel trade association, which similarly is contingent on respect for human rights. It should also take steps to ensure that no arms are being transferred to Israel through Shannon Airport.

Both governments need to be cognisant that the ICJ has confirmed that states may be held liable for complicity if they fail to prevent genocide or actively assist in it.

In its July 2024 Advisory Opinion, the ICJ also found that the state of Israel is acting in breach of Article 3 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, which prohibits apartheid. We are aware that the boycott and disinvestment campaigns played an important part in bringing about an end to apartheid in South Africa. Now is the time to consider similar campaigns to oblige the state of Israel to end its abuses of human rights for Palestinians.



IRELAND YEARLY MEETING RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Quaker House Dublin, Stocking Lane, Dublin, D16 V3F8

Phone/Answering – 01 4998003

e-mail – office@quakers.ie

In addition, we note that in practical terms there is much the Irish government can do to let their actions meet their public statements by helping Palestinians through this ongoing genocide and ethnic cleansing. For example, we are aware of the significant disparity between the number of Type D Long Stay Student Visas issued to Palestinians, of any faith, in 2026 compared to last year. This is in sharp contrast to Israeli citizens, of whatever religious background, who are on the Visa Exempt List.

As Quakers, whose shared belief is that there is “that of God in everyone”, our witness to the realities of the widening and deepening occupation of the West Bank compels us to work for its just end as the foundation for a lasting peace and security for both Palestinians and Israelis. We believe non-violent measures, such as those alluded to here, are a necessary step towards a time when all violations have ended.

We conclude this statement by echoing the words of Ireland's goalkeeper, Gavin Bazunu, in his statement, that our stance is not in opposition to the Israeli people or the Jewish community but against the atrocities in the region.

ENDS.

For inquiries, please contact office@quakers.ie.

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