

## **Palestinians face ‘persecution and denial of human rights in apartheid state’**

*Thursday, 20th May 2021*

***The Congress Executive Council met today and reiterates our solidarity with the people of Palestine. Our position is clear: Palestinians in Gaza and the Occupied Territories face persecution and denial of human rights by an occupying power in breach of international law. Palestinians in Israel face persecution and denial of human rights in what is now an apartheid state.***

We abhor the loss of life on all sides in recent days. What is happening is not a conflict of equals but rather a government with one of the most powerful armies in the world inflicting terror on the 2 million people of Gaza – the most densely populated area in the world. Gazans have nowhere to flee. They are a population under siege continuously for 16 years; not just now, in the midst of the current phase of the war on them – where more than 200 people, including more than 60 children have been killed.

We reiterate our support for the **Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions** call from civil society in Palestine. As the leadership of the Irish trade union movement, we call for government sanctions and an embargo on all security-military trade and joint military research. We encourage our affiliates to take action where they can on investments, pension funds, procurement, and boycotting illegal goods from the Occupied Territories and those produced under an apartheid system. We have agreed to step up our efforts to translate this support into effective, strategic campaigns that can significantly contribute to the struggle for freedom justice, and equality.

We support the BDS call for ending Israel’s 1967 occupation, ending Israel’s system of institutional, legal, and societal discrimination, which meets the UN definition of apartheid, and upholding the right of Palestinian refugees to return to the homes and lands from which they were uprooted and dispossessed during 1948 and ever since.

Congress recognises Minister Coveney’s recent efforts at the UN Security Council and at the EU Foreign Minister’s meeting and agrees with his assertion that *“the violence, trauma, and killing reminds us again of the consequences of our collective inertia and enduring failure to achieve a political resolution to this conflict”*. However, we also call upon him to take actions at home, including supporting the proposed Dáil motion on de facto annexation urging the government to take all measures within its power to ensure that Israel is held accountable for its annexation of Palestinian territory; halts all settlement activity, and ensures equal rights and an end to discrimination for all people under its effective control. It is also time to enact the Occupied Territories Bill.

Irish businesses also have a role to play in identifying, accounting for, and mitigating how they address their business-associated impacts on human rights in the region. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights also suggest the introduction of processes to enable remediation and prevention of any adverse human rights impacts they cause or to which they contribute.

**ENDS**