Dear Deputy

I urge you to do everything in your power to ensure Ireland takes effective action to stop Israel’s assault on Gaza, and to end Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory.

The Irish government has relied, for too long, on statements of condemnation against Israel’s abuse of Palestinians. It is no surprise that these statements have done nothing to stop Israel from stealing Palestinian land and strengthening its apartheid regime in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.  At best, these statements reveal a misplaced trust in a non-existent peace process. At worst, they unintentionally enable the Israeli state to continue committing war crimes, with no fear of consequences from the wider international community.

But surely now, on the brink of yet another massacre in Gaza, and as multilateral institutions like the UN and EU are failing to effectively respond, despite Ireland pushing hard for action in these forums, we have gone beyond the tipping point for Irish national action.

Surely now it is time for the Oireachtas to unite in support of concrete measures to help end Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territory, and to stop the cycles of violence that have killed too many already. I call on you to do everything you can to ensure your party voices its support for and pursues the following:

1. An immediate end to the violence and collective punishment of innocent civilians, and the free and safe access of humanitarian actors to those in need. This should include advance meaningful options at the UNSC to protect Palestinian lives such as the creation of safe zones and humanitarian corridors or by establishing a UN peace-keeping presence
2. A cross party motion recognising the de facto annexation of Palestine will be tabled in the coming weeks.  The issue of annexation is key to the recent events in Jerusalem.  Annexation is essentially concerned with the forced expulsion of Palestinian families to make way for illegal settlements.
3. Enact the Occupied Territories Bill introduced by Senator Frances Black and supported by ICTU, SADAKA, Christian Aid and Trocaire, which has just two legislative stages to go
4. Advocate for an independent investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to hold those committing crimes against humanity to account.
5. Formally recognising the State of Palestine and ending the blockade of Gaza to allow for the free movement of goods and people.

Every Israeli and Palestinian deserves to live in peace and security and so there must be an end to violence by all sides. But until Israel is held accountable for the consequences of its actions, opportunities for dialogue to find a path to peace remains remote.

Yours sincerely