

16th May, 2018

Mr. Simon Coveney TD
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
80 St. Stephen's Green
Dublin 2

Dear Minister Coveney

On behalf of the Executive Council of the ICTU I am writing to express our abhorrence at the massacre of innocent Palestinian protestors in Gaza this week. Up to 60 people have been killed according to numbers from the Palestinian Ministry of Health, including 5 children under 18 and thousands more severely injured. Our thoughts are with the dead and injured and their families.

At our meeting this morning we observed a minutes silence for those killed and injured over the past week. We also discussed the massacre and the response of the Israeli Government to the public outcry at the killing of protestors.

Executive Council members were gravely concerned at the latest developments. The targeting of accredited media reporting on the protests was also condemned.

We note your reported dismay and shock at the on-going deaths of Palestinians in Gaza due to Israel's use of live ammunition in response to demonstrations and your grave concern that the use of force seems disproportionate to the reported threat. We share your view that an independent investigation is urgently needed, as called for by the UN Secretary-General. We also note your response to calls from Israel to move the Irish Embassy to Jerusalem, wherein you articulate that Ireland supports a two-state solution and unless this happened Ireland would not be moving its embassy there. We also note your call on all other states to abide by the international consensus and not to establish diplomatic missions in Jerusalem at this time.

Given the severity of the situation however, we feel the response is inadequate and our Executive Council requested me to seek a meeting with you to discuss what further actions Ireland could take at this time, including the consideration of expulsion of Israeli diplomats and withdrawal of Irish diplomats from Israel. In this context members were especially concerned at the recent interview given by the Israeli ambassador on the Six One News this week.

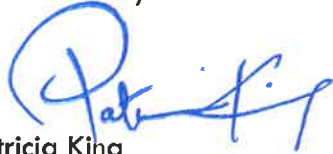
Events this week are a shameless violation of international law and the Israeli authorities show no signs that they intend to rein in such excessive force. The Irish Government must not only strongly condemn these actions but must also be to the fore internationally, at the UN calling for an independent investigation into these incidents and to hold the Israeli Government to account in the EU by calling an emergency meeting for European ministers to consider a proportionate response, including through the imposition of trade sanctions.

Ireland needs to lead the way in its own right also by supporting the urgent passing of Senator Frances Black's Occupied Territories Bill and by formally recognising the decision of the Dáil and finally recognise the state of Palestine.

The fact that this week's events occurred with the eyes of the world on Jerusalem shows the contempt that Israel has for the international community and the impunity it has become accustomed to for its violations of international law. It is the strong view of Congress that beyond condemnation there has to be a consequence for Israel for such appalling actions.

I would be grateful for your immediate action on these issues and look forward to hearing from you regarding a meeting with Congress.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Patricia King', with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

Patricia King
General Secretary