

Helen McEntee TD
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade
Department of Foreign Affairs
Iveagh House
Dublin 2
Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
King Charles St
London SW1A 2AH
The Hon Hamish Falconer MP
Middle East Minister
FCDO

11 March 2026

Palestine/Israel : British-Irish Parliamentary cooperation – calls for Government action

Dear Minister, Dear Secretary of State, Dear Middle East Minister,

Thank you for your respective letters of 3 March.

We much regret the absence of progress on Government actions commended in our letter to you of 22 December, and deplore the deterioration in conditions on the ground in the state of Palestine, rightly recognised as such by both our Governments.

As we write, Israel has again closed the Gaza Rafah crossing and locked down the entire West Bank.

The Government actions set out in our December letter still stand. They are :

- a ban on trade in goods and services (including investment) with illegal Israeli settlements
- accountability for breaches of International Law, whoever commits them
- enabling the UN and NGOs to do their jobs in Palestine
- Gaza access by diplomatic missions accredited to Palestine. T

The Israeli and US attacks on Iran will potentially be used as an excuse for inaction. This would be a mistake. The same disregard for international law by Israel and others, and the failure of the international community to hold them to account, cannot continue.

Some will point to this inaction as the driver behind these unlawful attacks on Iran. However oppressive and corrupt this Iranian regime may be – and it is – ignoring the law opens the door to mayhem and worse.

In Gaza, the « ceasefire » of October last year is not genuine ; over 600 Palestinians have been killed since then - most of them women and children. Israel continues to deny access to diplomats, journalists and international aid workers, and severely restricts food, medicines and

temporary accommodation. It denies access for mobile hospitals on spurious grounds. The « Gazafication » of the West Bank is intensifying, with the forced displacement of entire Palestinian communities, rampant murderous settler violence aided and abetted by the Israeli army, and unlawful measures to annex de facto the West Bank, tearing up the Oslo Accords. The Israeli Security Cabinet's decision to register Palestinian land as Israeli state property is an assertion of Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank, in flagrant breach of international law. This is annexation.

In this context we ask you to address specifically two illegal Israeli actions : the issuing of tenders to build the E1 settlement with the declared aim of « burying the two-state solution » and the ban on UNRWA and 37 international NGOs from operating in Palestine.

E1 settlement tenders – action needed

Tenders have been issued to build E1. We ask you and like-minded opponents of this disastrous project to warn now, before tenders are opened, that any individual or corporate body engaging in planning and building E1 puts at risk their ability to do business in or with our countries. Tenders were to be opened on 16 March. The US/Israel/Iran war means that deadline will not be met – but the warning by our governments is urgently needed.

We recommend that this warning be followed by a comprehensive ban on trade with settlements – goods, services and investment – consistent with the July 2024 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice and, in the case of Ireland, the unanimous advice of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade.

UNRWA and international NGOs operating in Palestine

The Israeli Government's unlawful ban on 37 reputable NGOs is now before the Israeli High Court. We ask the British and Irish Governments to make clear to Israel that there will be severe economic and political consequences if it does not rescind the banning order, and permit UNRWA to fulfil the mission it holds from the UN General Assembly. Enclosed is a factual assessment by the Norwegian Refugee Council (funded by both our Governments) of the truly terrible impact on the lives of Palestinians unless these decisions are reversed. We are witnessing systematic efforts to « privatise » the delivery of humanitarian assistance and thus destroy the UN and international aid structures on which peoples across the world depend. Gaza is only the start. We must not let it happen.

We ask you to respond urgently to these two specific requests. We reserve the right to raise Israel/Palestine in the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (22-24 March).

Signed

Debbie Abrahams MP

Paula Barker MP

Aengus Ó Snodaigh TD

Cathy Bennett TD

Ciarán Ahern TD

Siân Berry MP

The Baroness Alexander of Clevedon FRSE

Clive Betts MP

Senator Chris Andrews

Senator Frances Black

Ivana Bacik TD

The Rt Hon. the Baroness Blackstone

Senator Victor Boyhan
Richard Burgon MP
Joanna Byrne TD
Holly Cairns TD
The Rt Hon. Alistair Carmichael MP
The Rt Rev. the Lord Bishop of
Southwark
Dr Ellie Chowns MP
Rose Conway Walsh TD
Réada Cronin TD
Seán Crowe TD
Jen Cummins TD
Baroness Curran
Carla Denyer MP
Máire Devine TD
Paul Donnelly TD
The Lord Dubs
Colum Eastwood MP
The Baroness Elliott of Whitburn Bay
Sinéad Ennis MLA
Mairéad Farrell TD
Patricia Ferguson MP
Senator Eileen Flynn
Andrew George MP
Sinéad Gibney TD
Ann Graves TD
The Rt Hon. Louise Haigh MP
The Rt Hon. the Lord Hain
Senator Laura Harmon
Eoin Hayes TD
Rory Hearne TD
Ruth Jones MP
Declan Kearney MLA
Ben Lake MP
Sarah Owen MP
George Lawlor TD
Pádraig Mac Lochlainn TD
Rachael Maskell MP
Andy McDonald MP
Mary Lou McDonald TD
Senator Michael McDowell
Pauline McNeill MSP
Denise Mitchell TD
The Baroness Mobarik CBE
Abtisam Mohamed MP
Layla Moran MP
Johnny Mythen TD
Shónagh Ní Raghallaigh TD
Senator Malcolm Noonan
The Rt Hon. the Baroness Northover
The Lord Oates
Roderic O’Gorman TD
Brendan O’Hara MP
Louis O’Hara TD
Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire TD
Ruairí Ó Murchú TD
Dr Simon Opher MP
Fionntán Ó Súilleabháin TD
Liam Quaide TD
Adrian Ramsay MP
Senator Lynn Ruane
Pádraig Rice TD

Naz Shah MP

Marie Sherlock TD

Pat Sheehan MLA

Emma Sheerin MLA

Cat Smith MP

Duncan Smith TD

The Rt Hon. the Lord Soames of Fletching

Hannah Spencer MP

Brian Stanley TD

Senator Patricia Stephenson

The Rt Hon. the Lord Swire KCMG

The Rt Rev. the Lord Bishop of Gloucester

Pauline Tully TD

Barry Ward TD

Mark Ward TD

Matt Western MP

Yuan Yang MP