

National Statement

Minister Emer Higgins T.D.

UN High Level Conference on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and Implementation of the Two- State Solution

Tuesday, 28 July 2025

I thank our Co-Chairs, France and Saudi Arabia, for bringing us together today.

On behalf of Ireland:

- I reaffirm our unequivocal support for advancing the two-State solution.
- I endorse the conference Outcome Document, and
- I welcome the announcement by France that it will recognise the State of Palestine.

As we meet here today, Palestinians in Gaza are enduring unconscionable suffering.

The humanitarian situation has reached catastrophic levels.

- Mass starvation is spreading across the Gaza Strip.
- Babies are dying because of a man-made famine
- People are dying from violence, thirst and starvation.
- We are seeing the destruction of homes, hospitals and lives.

The humanitarian system in Palestine is crumbling, right when it is needed the most.

Israeli hostages remain in captivity with immense suffering for them and their families.

Let me reiterate Ireland's unequivocal condemnation of the heinous terrorist attack by Hamas on Israel on 7 October 2023.

We urgently need to see

- a ceasefire,
- the release of all hostages

I thank Egypt, Qatar and the United States for their efforts to secure progress as mediators.

And we need to see an influx of life-saving aid to the people of Gaza.

Humanitarian pauses and corridors are long overdue and the bare minimum that is required.

Israel must let aid enter Gaza in sufficient quantities and let the UN and humanitarians do their work.

Instead, people are being killed trying to access aid.

Children are starving before our eyes.

Aid workers are being killed.

This appalling situation shames us all.

It is an affront to our common humanity.

An affront to the Charter of this Organisation.

For decades, we have known the only path to a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the two-State solution.

And for decades, we have seen collective failure.

Failure to take collective, meaningful action.

To those suffering in Gaza and in the West Bank, the two State solution must seem out of reach.

But it cannot be about the long term.

It has to be about the here and now.

The two State solution is key to achieving our most urgent goal:

- securing an immediate and sustainable ceasefire
- the release of all hostages.

The two State solution is indispensable to delivering

- long-term peace,
- stability and
- security

For the region as a whole.

This is recognised clearly in UN Security Council Resolution 2735, which

- rejects any attempt at demographic or territorial change in the Gaza Strip,
- including any actions that reduce the territory of Gaza.

It also reaffirms the importance of unifying the Gaza Strip with the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority.

And yet, these principles are flouted - with total impunity.

We cannot stand by.

We must demonstrate more clearly that we afford equal value to the security of Israelis and Palestinians.

We, the international community, must act.

We do not underestimate the difficult journey that lies ahead.

We in Ireland know this from our experience of overcoming conflict.

As former President Mary Robinson said yesterday, the arc of peace is long.

While each conflict is different, we stand ready to share relevant experience from our peace process.

Ireland recognised the State of Palestine last year, because we believe in the equal right to

- self-determination,
- peace,
- security and
- dignity

for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

We welcome the announcement by France that it will recognise Palestine.

We encourage other countries to do the same.

We encourage those who have not done so to recognise the State of Israel.

The outcome of this High Level Conference must be a clear signal to the Palestinian people that we support their right to self-determination.

And that we support the choice of the Palestinian leadership to achieve this through a peaceful, political pathway.

We welcome the commitments made by President Abbas in this regard.

I reaffirm Ireland's support for the Palestinian Authority and its reform agenda.

I call on Israel to release the revenues owed to the PA that it is withholding.

This Conference must also be a turning point, where the international community mobilises at political, economic, financial and security levels to set in motion a path to the two State solution.

I reiterate Ireland's unwavering support for the indispensable role of UNRWA in support of Palestine refugees.

This is vitally important at present, in delivering life-saving aid to Gaza.

We must act to protect and preserve its vital mandate.

The International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion has stated that the continuing Israeli presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is illegal under international law and that settlements are also illegal.

Numerous Security Council Resolutions have reaffirmed that settlements are illegal.

And yet, in the West Bank including East Jerusalem, we are seeing

- Record levels of settlement construction,
- large-scale displacement of the Palestinian population,
- and
- unprecedented levels of violence.

In Gaza, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has concluded that the manner in which parties to the conflict have conducted hostilities, especially Israel's choice of methods and means of warfare, has involved unprecedented disregard for International Humanitarian Law.

Accountability for grave breaches of international law by any party must be a focus of our efforts.

There must also be accountability for unilateral actions that undermine the viability of the two-State solution.

The international community must bring an end to the devastating cycles of violence.

We must make good on our commitments to implement, once and for all, the two-State solution.

The outcome document, which I endorse, charts a path forward.

To secure peace and security, for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

We must seize this opportunity before it is too late.