



Statement of Ireland

40th session of the Human Rights Council

*Interactive dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on the protests in the Occupied
Palestinian Territory*

18 March 2019

Ireland aligns with the statement of the European Union.

Mr (Vice) President,

Ireland welcomes the Commission of Inquiry. We thank the members for their commitment and their efforts, and for the sobering report presented to the Council.

My Government is closely examining the report's findings and recommendations.

Ireland was profoundly shocked by the events in Gaza last May, and the scale of the casualties inflicted by Israeli forces on Palestinian demonstrators.

In the intervening period, we have remained seriously concerned by the many reports of ongoing violence, and the high numbers of casualties, particularly among children, which have led to extreme difficulty in ensuring even basic medical care for civilians.

Ireland does not dispute that Israel, like every country, has the right to defend its territory. And we recognise that the organisers of the demonstrations have a clear responsibility to prevent violence. This includes any activity which could cause injury or damage in Israel, especially to civilians.

International law, however, clearly defines the circumstances in which force, and in particular deadly force, can be used against civilians. Such force must only be used in cases of real and immediate threat to life, and only as a last resort – that is, when other methods have failed. The use of force should also be proportionate to the threat posed. We do not believe that these limits were observed.

Mr (Vice) President,

Ireland supported the convening of the 28th Special Session of the Council and cosponsored the resolution establishing the Commission of Inquiry. The UN Secretary General and others,

including the Irish Government, had called for an independent investigation into these devastating events. It is deeply regrettable that Israel chose not to cooperate with the Commission.

We would be interested to hear more from the Commission on possible next steps. What follow up would they like to see from this Council to the recommendations contained in their report?

Thank you.