WATCH: National Demonstration for Freedom & Justice in Palestine

# June 2017

Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign

http://www.ipsc.ie/uncategorized/8360

On Saturday 10th June around 1,500 people from all over Ireland (and further afield) marched in a National Demonstration to mark the 50th anniversary of Israel’s occupation and illegal colonisation of the Palestinian West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza.

The Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC) organised the event to convey a simple message, that  ‘100 years of injustice & 50 years of occupation is enough! It’s time for freedom, justice and equality for the Palestinian people!’

[Click here to read the leaflet (PDF)](http://www.ipsc.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/National-Demo-Leafelt.pdf) we handed out to thousands of people along the way.

Speaking at the rally outside the Israeli Embassy in Dublin, IPSC Chairperson Fatin Al Tamimi said:

Although we are here today to mark the 50th anniversary of the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinian story of injustice didn’t start only 50 years ago. It started 100 years ago when the British Empire decided it would give our land to European colonisers in the Zionist movement. It continued 80 years ago when Zionist paramilitaries expelled 750,000 of my people from their homes, forcing them into exile to facilitate the creation of the state of Israel. Our factories, farms, marketplaces and homes passed into the hands of others.

At first our story was one of exile, frozen lives subsisting in refugee camps and awaiting our return.  Then 50 years ago, in just six days, the remnant of our homeland passed also into the hands of Israel, and to exile was added a brutal regime of apartheid and military occupation that endures to this day.

The Israeli state now controls our lands, strangles our economy, steals our resources and that subjugates our people. It is a sad fact that Israel seeks neither peace nor an end to the occupation. Our occupiers don’t want us to live, to be free, to flourish; in fact, Israel doesn’t want us at all.

So how does our situation look today?

In Gaza where my sister lives, two million of us are imprisoned in a tiny strip of land.  On a good day we have eight hours of electricity and we hope that 2017 will not be marked by a fourth Israeli onslaught in eight years.  With contaminated water, a decade long illegal siege, and devastated infrastructure, the UN doubts whether Gaza will be liveable by 2020.

In the West Bank where I am originally from, we are 3 million non-citizens corralled into enclaves surrounded by illegal walls and military checkpoints.  Here, the apartheid regime has denied us access to 60% of the land, taken over 80% of our water resources, and planted 800,000 illegal, and often violent and racist Israeli settler colonists to whom it seems laws don’t apply.

There are millions of Palestinian refugees languishing in exile, longing to exercise our internationally mandated right to return our homeland. Inside the State of Israel, we are 20% of the population subject to over 50 discriminatory laws, largely existing on the margins of society.

The injustice is breath-taking; it is also calculated, designed, evaluated and instrumental.

We Palestinians are not equal, not wanted, and not valued.  If we were, Israel would not kill so many of us – more than 10,000 in the past 30 years, including more than 2,400 children – little lives who never had a chance to flourish.  Likewise, 800,000 of us would not have been imprisoned since 1967, and every year 700 children would not be arrested and many tortured. We would not be criminalised for seeking to live.

Yet we do not despair. We are steadfast. The weekly marches to the illegal wall in Nabi Saleh, Bil’in and elsewhere; the Gaza fishermen who daily face gunfire to bring home food; the mother who sits in the ruins of her home to help her children with their homework – they all prove that we Palestinians endure because, despite everything, we maintain our faith in the promises of life. Palestinian culture is a culture of life: of food, dancing, music, family and love.

Our poet Rafeef Ziadah says it best in her memorable title, “We teach life!”

The Palestinian struggle is embedded in the principles of international law.  Justice, equality and dignity are entitlements held in common; and a denial to one is a denial to all.

Yet Western governments – including, sadly, the Irish government, which is also my government – have done absolutely nothing to end Israel’s violations or secure our freedom. No concrete action has been taken in five decades. Ask yourself, if Israel has never been punished for its crimes, then why would it stop acting like a rogue state?

Where governments fail to act, ordinary people and civil society must step in. Today all of you can help us Palestinians to attain our freedom in a simple way – join the Palestinian-led global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement that aims to compel Israel to end injustice.

You can boycott Israeli products and complain whenever you see them in shops, markets or stalls. Let retailers know its unacceptable to help fund the Israeli war machine!

You can help us call on the Irish government to end the disgusting Irish arms trade with Israel that has seen Ireland spend more than €15 million on military goods from Israel over the last decade, including most recently two drones – the same kind of drones whose incessant hum terrorises the people of Gaza on a daily basis.

Just as globally we were we were successful with Veolia, G4S, Orange and of course the Irish company CRH, you can help us to get Hewlett Packard to stop profiteering from my people’s suffering. HP supplies vital technology to Israel’s occupation forces, so make a pledge today to boycott HP products.

If you are an creative or performing artist you can sign the Irish Artists’ Pledge to Boycott Israel and get involved in PalFest Ireland. If you are an Academic you can sign the Irish Academics’ Pledge to Bocyott Israel and join Academics for Palestine.

You can help put pressure on the Irish government to impose sanctions on Israel. Sanctions like banning products from illegal Israeli settlements, and ending the EU agreement that gives Israel special access to European markets.

By doing so you will send the clear message that apartheid, racial discrimination and colonisation are unacceptable in the twenty-first century.  By doing so you will be showing Palestinians, and the world, that you will not sit by while Palestinians struggle for self-determination, for equality, for justice and for freedom!

FREE FREE PALESTINE!