



Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign CLG

التضامن الإيرلندي الفلسطيني

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*His Excellency Ambassador Robin Barnett CMG
Embassy of the United Kingdom to Ireland
29 Merrion Road
Dublin 4*

2nd November 2017

Balfour Centenary offers opportunity to help right a historic wrong against the Palestine people

Your Excellency Ambassador Barnett,

We are contacting you on behalf of the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Palestinian citizens and residents of Ireland, north and south, to ask the British government to acknowledge its responsibility to help resolve the current situation in Palestine and the plight of the Palestinian people.

As today marks the centenary of the Balfour Declaration in November 1917, it is an apt time to be candid about the fact that British government ministers and officials of the time laid the groundwork for an ethno-religious exclusionary Zionist state in historic Palestine, granting land that was not theirs to give away in the first place to the Zionist movement – a move that has had disastrous consequences for the region, especially the Palestinian people, ever since.

The 1917 Balfour Declaration was the direct cause of the 1947-49 Nakba, the catastrophe which befell the Palestinians while under the British Mandate control, when Zionist paramilitary groups ethnically cleansed over 750,000 Palestinians from their homes and established the state of Israel. It was the cause, too, of the 1967 war of conquest that saw the rest of historic Palestine occupied by the Israeli state.

Now there are over 7 million Palestinian refugees around the world, many of them still living in refugee camps. They are 'stateless' with no documents to work, travel or enjoy basic human rights.

Britain should face its historical responsibility, acknowledge what it has done and atone for this crime, for which the Palestinian people still suffer the unjust consequences. Israel continues, with impunity, to occupy and colonise Palestinian land, to flout international law, commit war crimes and violate human rights.

Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign Company Limited by Guarantee

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While acknowledging the impossibility of ever truly undoing the harm and hurt caused 100 years ago, we nevertheless believe that the British government can make important moves to atone for your state's past actions and crimes against the people of Palestine.

Firstly, instead of 'celebrating' the Balfour declaration which has led to so much misery, the centenary anniversary provides an opportunity to apologise to the Palestinian people for failing to uphold Palestinian rights during the Mandate.

Secondly, the centenary presents an apt time for the British government to take concrete steps to atone for its crimes against the Palestinian people. Such steps would include, first and foremost, the ending of its support for Israel's crimes by implementing diplomatic and economic sanctions against this rogue state that continues to colonise Palestinian land in blatant violation of international law.

Thirdly, the British state must move to stop the attempts to criminalise Palestinian solidarity and Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, at home and abroad.

Such ethical steps would greatly contribute to advancing the cause of achieving freedom, justice and equality in the Palestine-Israel region, the fruits of which would be a just and lasting peace.

Yours sincerely,

Fatin Al Tamimi

Chairperson

Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign

John Dorman

Vice-Chair

Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign

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