

13 August 2020

**Submission of NGO Monitor at the 130<sup>th</sup> Session of the  
Human Rights Committee for the Adoption of the List of Issues For Ireland**

NGO Monitor, a project of the Institute for NGO Research, an NGO in special consultative status with ECOSOC, respectfully submits the following information to the Human Rights Committee (“HRC” or “Committee”) in advance of its adoption of the List of Issues for Ireland at the 130<sup>th</sup> Session.

According to the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (“ICCPR”), Ireland is required “to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (Art. 2); “to engage in any activity or perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms recognized herein” (Art. 5); to prohibit by law “any propaganda for war” and “any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence” (Art. 20); and to “prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (Art. 26).

Ireland is currently failing to fulfill these obligations, particularly with regards to antisemitism and discrimination aimed at those of Israeli national origin. A filmmaker who visited the country in 2019 described the level of antisemitism as “frightening”.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, a survey conducted by the EU found that, of any Western European country, Ireland has one of the lowest levels of believing antisemitism to be an important problem.<sup>2</sup> A Dáil member (representing Kildare North) made a number of antisemitic tweets between 2012 and 2015, including “comparing Israeli embassy staff to monkeys, alleging that Jeremy Corbyn had been targeted by Mossad, and retweeting a post saying that Hitler was a pawn of a Rothschild-owned bank.”<sup>3</sup>

As a result, Ireland needs to take stronger steps to combat antisemitism and anti-Israel national origin discrimination. One way it can do so is through the adoption of the

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/level-anti-semitism-across-island-ireland-frightening-says-journalist-tuvia-tenenbom-984542>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-30908498.html>;  
<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/85035>. Disturbingly, some Irish media characterized this survey data as meaning Ireland was the “least antisemitic” country in the EU. In fact, it suggests that Irish citizens are indifferent or ill-informed about the issue.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.thejc.com/news/world/new-sinn-f%C3%A9in-parliamentarian-apologises-after-comparing-israeli-embassy-staff-to-monkeys-1.497043>; <https://www.thejc.com/news/world/irish-jewish-leader-will-request-sinn-fein-politicians-be-educated-about-antisemitism-1.497125>

International Holocaust Remembrance Association (IHRA) definitions of Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial and Distortion. As recommended by the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, in his 2019 report to the General Assembly, these definitions “can offer valuable guidance for identifying antisemitism in its various forms” and is a “critical non-legal educational tool.”<sup>4</sup>

Another area where Ireland is failing to live up to its obligations under the ICCPR is via its development funding to NGOs. Irish Aid provides significant annual funding both directly and indirectly to NGOs that unfortunately promote antisemitism, anti-Israel national origin discrimination, violent imagery and rhetoric, and call for the elimination of Israel as the national homeland of the Jewish people<sup>5</sup> (violation of Articles 2, 5, 20, 26). Several of these groups also have links to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a terrorist organization designated by the EU, the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Israel. This destructive funding not only violates the Irish government’s obligations under the ICCPR and international and domestic law, but creates and contributes to an environment of hate and incitement that endangers Jews and Israelis in Ireland and worldwide.

**NGO Monitor therefore asks the Committee to include the following in its List of Issues to Ireland:**

- Comment on the increase in antisemitic and anti-Israel discourse in the political arena, the media, and NGOs funded by the Irish government. Please indicate whether Ireland has conducted campaigns to raise public awareness and to combat antisemitic behavior and anti-Israel incitement.
- Describe what concrete steps have been taken by Ireland, including regulatory reforms and legislation, to prevent antisemitism and anti-Israel national origin discrimination in all settings, including funding to NGOs.
- Detail efforts made by Ireland to provide effective remedies for victims of antisemitism and anti-Israel national origin discrimination.
- Describe what steps have been taken by Ireland to prohibit direct and indirect support to designated terrorist organizations, in all settings, including funding to NGOs linked to designated terror organizations.
- Comment on whether Ireland plans to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Definition of Antisemitism and the Working Definition of Holocaust Denialism and Distortion.

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<sup>4</sup> “Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief,” September 20, 2019: <https://undocs.org/A/74/358>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/funder/ireland/>