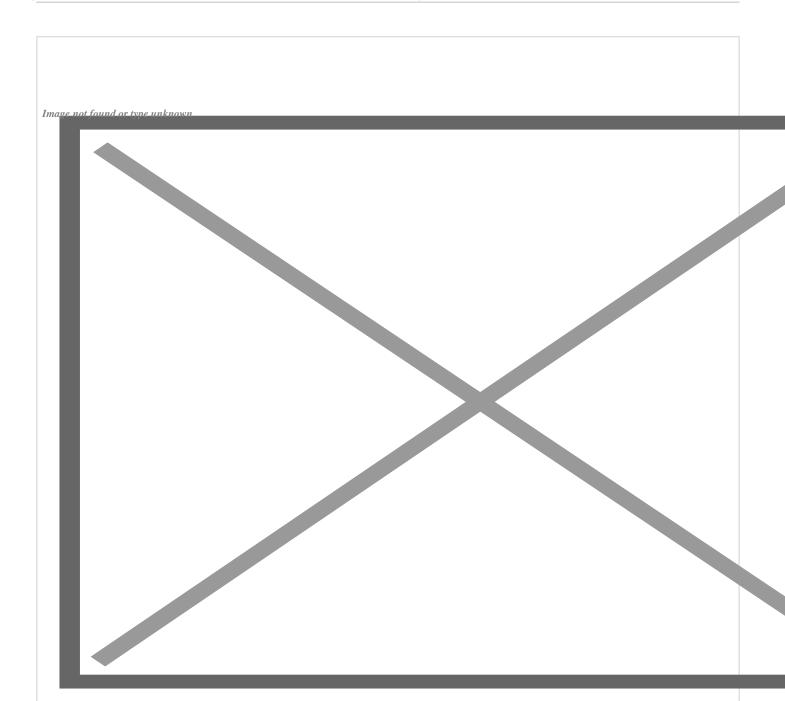# Ireland condemns Israel's de facto annexation of Palestine

Pro-Palestinian protesters seen on O'Connell Street, Dublin, during a Rally for Palestine on Saturday, May 22, 2021, in Dublin, Ireland [Artur Widak/ Getty Images]

Dublin, May 26 (RHC)-- The Irish government has supported a parliamentary motion condemning the "de facto annexation" of Palestinian land by Israeli authorities, in what it said was the first use of the phrase by a European Union country in relation to Israel.

Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said on Tuesday that the motion, brought forward by opposition party Sinn Fein, "is a clear signal of the depth of feeling across Ireland."

"The scale, pace and strategic nature of Israel's actions on settlement expansion and the intent behind it have brought us to a point where we need to be honest about what is actually happening on the ground. … It is de facto annexation," Coveney, of the centre-right Fine Gael party, told parliament.

"This is not something that I, or in my view this house, says lightly. We are the first EU state to do so. But it reflects the huge concern we have about the intent of the actions and of course, their impact," he said.

If passed, the amendment would require the government to expel the Israeli ambassador to Ireland and to impose economic, political and cultural sanctions against Israel. Most countries view settlements Israel has built in territory captured in the 1967 war as illegal and as an obstacle to peace with the Palestinians.

Coveney, who has represented Ireland on the United Nations Security Council in debates on Israel in recent weeks, had insisted on adding a condemnation of recent rocket attacks on Israel by the Palestinian group Hamas before he agreed to government support for the motion. Some of the Irish parliamentarians wore face masks bearing the Palestine flag or of the checkered keffiyeh pattern.

The left-leaning Sinn Fein party refused to support the government amendment condemning Hamas attacks. The motion came days after a ceasefire ended 11 days of the worst fighting between Israel and Palestinian armed groups in years.

Some welcomed Ireland's move on social media. "Ireland has become the first EU state to recognise Israel's de facto annexation of Palestine in contravention of international law," tweeted Ronan Burtenshaw, editor of the UK's socialist Tribune Magazine. "A landmark on the road to isolating an apartheid state as we did in the 1980s. Next stop: Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions."

John Brady, a Sinn Fein politician, tweeted: "We have forced a massive shift on the position of the Irish Government. They have stated that Israel has de-facto annexed Palestinian lands. Ireland is 1st EU country to state Israel's actions break international law. There must be consequences for these actions #FreePalestine."

People Before Profit's Richard Boyd Barrett described Wednesday's coming vote as "historic." More than 5,200 people have signed Barrett's petition, which calls on the Irish government "to publicly declare that the state of Israel is guilty of war crimes."

Radio Habana Cuba