GRADUATE SCHOOL
ISTANBUL MEDENIYET UNIVERSITY
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Ireland's Attitude towards Israeli-Palestinian Conflict after 7 October

Master's Thesis

Chalila Raihan Nabilazka

January 2025

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THESIS JURY APPROVAL

This Master's thesis titled Ireland's Attitude towards Israeli-Palestinian Conflict after 7 October." written by Chalila Raihan Nabilazka at the Department of International Relations was accepted by our jury.

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Date of Defense: 10 / 01 / 2025

STATEMENTS

Style and Reference Manual Statement

Having reviewed this thesis written under my supervision, I confirm that it has been written in accordance with American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition Manual of Style and used its [footnote/in text] reference format consistently throughout the entire text.

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that all information in this dissertation has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conducts, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Signature

Chalila Raihan Nabilazka

GENİŞ ÖZET

İrlanda'nın 7 Ekim Sonrası İsrail-Filistin Çatışmasına Yaklaşımı

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Ocak 2025

Bu çalışma, 7 Ekim saldırısı sonrasında İrlanda'nın İsrail-Filistin Çatışmasına yönelik tutumunu ve ülkenin aldığı önlemlerin altında yatan nedenleri incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma nitel yöntem kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiş ve sosyal inşacılık (konstrüktivizm) teorisinden faydalanılmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda, İrlanda'nın sömürge sonrası bir toplum, İrlanda Anayasalarında 'ahlâk ve adaletin koruyucusu ve çok taraflılığın destekçisi olarak yansıtılan kurumsal kimliklerinin ve insan haklarına bağlı bir ülke' olarak İrlanda'nın sosyal kimliğinin çıkarlarını ve eylemlerini etkilediği tespit edilmiş; bu kimliklerin İrlanda'nın İsrafil-Filistin meselesinde iki devletli çözümü desteklemeye devam eden dış politikasına da yansıdığı görülmüştür.

Kökeni büyük ölçüde 1917 Balfour Deklarasyonu'na dayanan İsrail-Filistin sorunu Orta Doğu bölgesinde kronik bir mesele olmanın ötesinde tarihsel olarak küresel aktörlerin de meseleye sıklıkla dâhil olduğu ve sonuçları ve etkileri itibarıyla bölge sınırlarını aşan bir niteliğe sahiptir.

1922'de İngiliz Mandası'nın yürürlüğe girmesinin ardından, Filistin'de bir Yahudi devleti kurmayı amaçlayan Siyonist Yahudi dalgası başladı. Avrupa'da zulüm gören Yahudi toplumu için vaat edilmiş topraklar olarak görülen Filistin, güvenli bir sığınak haline geldi. Filistin'de Yahudi toplumunun artması, İngiltere'den bağımsızlıklarını kazanmaları beklenen Filistinli Araplar ile Siyonistler arasında gerginliğe yol açtı. 1936'dan 1939'a kadar süren ayaklanmalar İngiltere'yi, Filistin'in Filistinli Araplar ve Yahudi toplumu için iki

devlete bölünmesini, Yahudi toplumu için göç ve toprak alımına kısıtlamalar getirilmesini ve Filistin'e bağımsızlık verilmesini içeren 1939 Beyaz Kitabını yayınlamaya itti. Bu elbette iki toplum arasındaki gerilimi arttırdı ve yetişkin Filistinli erkeklerin yüzde onu Siyonist askeri grup Haganah tarafından öldürüldü. Ancak dünyanın dikkati, altı milyon Yahudi'nin Nazi ölüm kamplarında öldüğü, diğerlerinin ise Avrupa'dan Filistin'e kaçtığı İkinci Dünya Savaşı ile dağılmıştı. Böylece, İngilizlerin göçmen sayısına getirdiği sınırlamalara rağmen göç devam etti.

Kasım 1947'de BM, İngiltere'nin Filistin üzerindeki mandasını en geç Ağustos 1948'de sona erdiren ve bölgeyi Arap ve Yahudi devletleri olarak bölen ve Kudüs'ü BM yönetimine veren 181 sayılı kararı yayınladı. Bölünme sonucunda bölgenin 11.100 kilometrekaresi (%42) Filistinlilere, 14.100 kilometrekaresi (%56) Siyonistlere, Kudüs ve Beytüllahim'den oluşan kalan %2'lik kısım ise uluslararası yönetime bırakıldı. Kararlara tepki olarak Mayıs 1948'e kadar Filistin'de iç savaş çıktı ve bu da büyük bir Arap-İsrail Savaşı'na yol açtı. Siyonistler ise bölünmeyi kabul etti. Ancak Siyonistlerin bu kabulü, BM tarafından belirlenen topraklardan daha fazlasını ilhak etme planıyla el ele gitti. İlerleyen yıllarda Filistin topraklarının İsrail tarafından ilhak edilmesi, yüz binlerce insanın Filistin'in çeşitli bölgelerinden kaçarak başka bölgelere ya da *Nakba* olarak bilinen çevre Arap ülkelerine mülteci olarak gitmesine neden oldu. Takip eden on yıllarda dört Arap-İsrail savaşı ve iki intifada yaşanmış, İsrail'in Gazze'ye yönelik çok sayıda askeri saldırısı olmuştur.

İsrail'in 14 Mayıs 1948'de İngilizlerin Hayfa'dan ayrılmasının arifesinde bağımsızlığını ilan etmesinin ardından 1948 (Birinci) Arap-İsrail Savaşı başlamış ve on ay sürmüştür. Bu savaş sırasında birçok ateşkes ve savaşın yeniden başlaması gerçekleşti. Savaştan sonra İsrail, BM'nin Yahudilere verdiği toprakların tamamını ve Araplara verdiği toprakların %60'ını kontrol etmeyi başardı. Mısır Gazze'yi yönetti ve Ürdün Batı Şeria'yı yönetti. 1948 Savaşı aynı zamanda "Yeşil Hat" ya da yaygın olarak bilinen adıyla 1967 Hattı ile sonuçlandı.

1956'da Süveyş Kanalı millileştirildi ve Tiran Boğazı Mısır tarafından kapatılarak İsrail içinde ve dışında tüm ticari faaliyetler engellendi ve bu da İkinci Arap-İsrail Savaşı'na neden oldu. İkinci Arap-İsrail Savaşı, İsrail'in Gazze'yi işgalinin ilki olmuş, dört ay sürmüş ve İsrail ordusunun Filistinlilere yönelik yaygın katliamıyla karakterize olmuştur. İkinci Arap-İsrail Savaşı'ndan sonra, daha sonra Filistin halkının uluslararası düzeyde temsilcisi olacak olan Filistin Kurtuluş Örgütü (FKÖ) kuruldu.

1967 (Üçüncü) Arap-İsrail Savaşı, İsrail'in tüm Filistin'i, Golan Tepeleri'ni ve Sina'yı başarıyla kontrol etmesiyle Arap devletleri için tam bir aşağılanma oldu. Bu savaştan sonra İsrail, Batı tarafından Orta Doğu'da bölgesel bir güç olarak görülmeye başlandı ve ABD ile "özel ilişki" aşamasına girdi. 1973 (Dördüncü) Arap-İsrail Savaşı, İsrail'in savaşın başında yenildiği ancak savaşı kazanmayı başardığı son Arap-İsrail savaşıydı. Yom-Kippur Savaşı'nın ardından OPEC'in Arap üyeleri Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Avrupa ülkelerine petrol ambargosu uygulayarak bir petrol krizine neden oldu. Yom-Kippur Savaşı'nın ardından, Sabra ve Şatilla mülteci kamplarında 3.000 Filistinli mültecinin öldürüldüğü ve uluslararası kınamaya neden olan 1982 Lübnan İşgali gerçekleşti.

Arap-İsrail savaşı döneminden sonra Filistinliler bağımsızlıkları için kendilerine güvendiler ve sırasıyla 1987-1993 ve 2000-2005 yılları arasında birinci ve ikinci intifada gerçekleşti. Bu iki dönem arasında Oslo barış süreci gerçekleşti. Ancak bölgeye kalıcı barış getirme çabaları başarısız oldu. İkinci İntifada'nın sona ermesinden bugüne kadar (2024) İsrail, 2009 Dökme Kurşun Operasyonu, 2012 Pilar Savunma Operasyonu, 2014 Koruyucu Hat Operasyonu, 2021 Duvarın Muhafızı Operasyonu, 2022 Şafak Vakti Operasyonu ve Ekim 2023'te başlayan Demir Kılıç Operasyonu dahil olmak üzere çeşitli askeri operasyonlar gerçekleştirdi. Tüm bu askeri eylemler, aralarında kadın ve çocukların da bulunduğu can kayıplarına yol açmış ve uluslararası toplum tarafından kınanmıştır. Dönem boyunca ateşkesler ve iki tarafı uzlaştırma çabaları da yürütüldü. Ancak bunların hepsi yetersiz kaldı.

Bu mesele, Filistin'in İsrail işgaline direnişinde önemli bir aktör olarak öne çıkan Hamas'ın (*Harakat al Muqawwamah Al-Islamiyah*) 7 Ekim 2023 tarihinde gerçekleştirdiği "Aksa Tufanı" operasyonu ile birlikte yeni bir evreye girmiştir. Hamas, bu operasyonu Gazze Şeridi'ndeki ablukanın kaldırılması, İsrail işgalinden kurtuluş, Filistinlilerin ulusal haklarının yeniden kazanılması, bağımsızlık ve kendi kaderini tayin hakkının elde edilmesi ile başkenti Kudüs olan bir Filistin devleti kurma yolunda atılmış bir adım olarak açıklamıştır. Bu çerçevede, Aksa Tufanı, İsrail'i Mescid-i Aksa ve kutsal mekânlar üzerinde tam olarak hâkimiyet kurma girişimlerinden, Filistin davasını tasfiye etmek amacıyla İsrail'in binlerce Filistinliyi tutuklamasından, Filistinlilere ait toprakları ele geçirme ve Yahudileştirme çabalarından, Batı Şeria'da büyüyen yasadışı yerleşimlerden, yasadışı yerleşimcilerin Filistinlilere yönelik artan saldırılarından ve Gazze'ye yönelik on altı yıldır devam eden ablukadan sorumlu olduğu iddialarıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Daha geniş bir bölgesel ortamda ise, İsrail'in Körfez Arap ülkeleri ile ve son olarak da Suudi Arabistan'la ilişkilerini normalleştirme girişimleri Filistin direnişi açısından böylesi bir operasyonu gerekli kılmıştır. Hamas'ın bu operasyonu üzerine, İsrail zaten yıllardır abluka altında tuttuğu Gazze'yi tamamen kuşatmış, yoğun hava saldırıları ve bombalamalar ile karşılık vermiştir. İsrail, soykırıma varan yoğun saldırılarının yanı sıra insani yardım kuruluşlarının ve donör ülkelerin insanî yarımlarının bölgeye girişini engelleyerek Gazze halkını çöküşün eşiğine getiren büyük, eşi benzeri görülmemiş bir yıkıma neden oldu.

Çatışmaya ilişkin dünya ülkelerinden gelen tepkiler bölünmüş durumdadır. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve müttefikleri başta olmak üzere Batılı ülkelerin çoğu, İsrail'i desteklerken, Küresel Güney'in çoğunluğu Filistin'in yanında yer almıştır. Öte yandan bir Avrupa ülkesi ve ABD'nin yakın müttefiki olan İrlanda ise, Filistinlilerin yanında yer alarak Avrupa Birliği içinde aykırı bir tutum sergilemiştir. 7 Ekim 2023 tarihinden bugüne, yani Aralık 2024 tarihine kadar İrlanda, hem bölgesel hem de uluslararası düzeyde çeşitli vesilelerle defalarca ateşkes çağrısında bulunmuştur. İrlanda, Netanyahu hükümetini Gazze'deki

eylemleri ve halka uyguladıkları zulüm nedeniyle kınamıştır. Ayrıca İrlanda, Yakın Doğu'daki Filistinli Mültecilere Yardım ve Bayındırlık Ajansı (UNRWA - United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees) üyelerinin 7 Ekim saldırısına karıştığı suçlamasıyla donör ülkelerin fonlarını geri çektiği dönemde UNRWA'yı desteklemeye devam etmiştir. İrlanda ayrıca Avrupa Komisyonu'ndan İsrail'in insan haklarını korumakla yükümlü olduğu Avrupa Birliği-İsrail Ortaklık Anlaşması'nın gözden geçirilmesini talep etmiştir. Ayrıca İrlanda, Ürdün ve Mısır da dâhil olmak üzere Orta Doğu ülkeleriyle çatışmanın yatıştırılması için sürekli olarak çalışmakta ve çatışmanın çözümüne katkıda bulunabilmek için bu ülkelerle yakın temas halinde bulunmaktadır. Son olarak İrlanda, 2024 Mayıs ayı sonunda Filistin'i egemen bir devlet olarak tanımıştır.

İrlanda'nın yerel kimliğini şekillendiren kilit faktörlerden birinin, ülkenin çıkarlarını derinden etkileyen İngiliz sömürge yönetimi altındaki tarihsel deneyim olduğu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, İrlanda'nın hem kurumsal hem de sosyal kimliklerinin, İsrail-Filistin meselesinde önemli bir kırılma noktası olan 7 Ekim Aksa Tufanı operasyonu sonrasındaki yaklaşımını ve politikalarını etkilediği açıktır. İrlanda Anayasası'nda kendine yer bulan post-kolonyal ulusal kimlik, İrlanda'yı 'sömürge sonrası bir toplum, adalet ve ahlâkın savunucusu ve çok taraflılığın sadık bir destekçisi' olarak tasvir etmektedir. İrlanda'nın kimliğinin bu unsurları sadece iç politikasına yön vermekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda uluslararası ilişkilere yaklaşımına ve dış politikadaki duruşuna da rehberlik etmektedir.

Sömürge sonrası bir toplum olarak İrlanda, ezilen halkların ve kendi kaderini tayin hakkı çerçevesinde bağımsızlık hareketlerinin karşılaştığı mücadeleler konusunda derin bir anlayışa sahiptir. Bu bakış açısı İrlanda'nın kendi sömürge tarihi ile İsrail işgali altında yaşayan Filistinlilerin mevcut durumu arasında paralellikler kurmasına yol açmaktadır. İrlanda'nın İngiliz yönetimine karşı bağımsızlık mücadelesi deneyimi, Filistinlilerin devlet olma mücadelesiyle örtüşmekte, dayanışma duygusunu ve Filistin davasını desteklemek için ahlaki

bir yükümlülüğü teşvik etmektedir. Bu post-kolonyal kimlik, İsrail'in yıllardır sürdürdüğü işgal politikalarını yüksek sesle eleştirmesinin ve uluslararası platformlarda Filistinlilerin haklarını savunmasının da gösterdiği gibi, İrlanda'yı ezilenlerin yanında durmaya itmektedir. İrlanda'nın adalet ve ahlâka olan bağlılığı kurumsal kimliğinin bir diğer temelidir. Bu bağlılık, uluslararası hukuku destekleme, insan haklarını koruma ve küresel kalkınmaya katkıda bulunma konusundaki kararlılığına da yansımaktadır. İrlanda'nın dış politikası, uluslararası ilişkilere adalet, eşitlik ve hukukun üstünlüğüne saygı ilkelerinin rehberlik etmesi gerektiği inancına dayanmaktadır. Bu ahlaki çerçeve, İrlanda'nın İsrail-Filistin meselesine ilişkin dış politik söylem ve de eylemlerinin temelini büyük ölçüde belirlemekte ve şiddeti ve insan hakları ihlallerini ayrım gözetmeyecek bir biçimde kınamasından iki devletli bir çözüme ulaşmayı amaçlayan girişimlere kadar her türden desteği vermesinin altındaki önemli sebeplerden birini oluşturmaktadır.

Sömürgecilik sonrası ve ahlaki kimliğinin yanı sıra İrlanda'nın çok taraflılığa verdiği destek de dış politikasının şekillenmesinde önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. İrlanda uluslararası işbirliğine ve çok taraflı kurumların küresel barış ve güvenliğin korunmasındaki rolüne değer vermektedir. Bu durum İrlanda'nın Birleşmiş Milletler'e aktif katılımında ve İsrail-Filistin çatışmasını ele alan Birleşmiş Milletler kararlarına verdiği tutarlı destekte açıkça görülmektedir. İrlanda'nın çok taraflılık tercihi aynı zamanda Avrupa Birliği içinde fikir birliği oluşturma çabalarını da yönlendirmekte ve bu çerçevede çatışmaya yönelik olarak insan hakları ve uluslararası hukuka öncelik veren dengeli bir yaklaşımın savunuculuğunu yapmaktadır.

İsrail-Filistin meselesi bağlamında İsrail'in uygulamaları sonucu yerleşimci sömürgeciliğin devam ettiği, -dünyadaki halkların büyük çoğunluğu Filistin direnişini destekleme noktasında hemfikir olsa da- hükümetlerin bu mesele özelinde verdikleri tepkilerde kutuplaştığı ve küresel adalet normlarının öneminin arttığı mevcut uluslararası bağlamda İrlanda'nın kurumsal kimliği,

yalnızca bölgesel ölçekte Filistin direnişi için değil aynı zamanda daha genel bir perspektifle, küresel ölçekte anti-sömürgeci ve anti-işgalci hareket için motive edici bir güç olarak hizmet etmektedir. İrlanda'nın İsrail-Filistin anlaşmazlığı karşısındaki söylem, tutum ve eylemleri, İrlanda'nın insan haklarına bağlı bir orta güç olarak kimliğini yansıtmaktadır. Bu kimlik İrlanda'nın Gazze'deki soykırım olarak nitelendirilen insani krizi ele alma, Filistinlilerin kendi kaderini tayin hakkını savunma ve meseleye adil bir çözüm bulunmasını teşvik etme çabalarını yönlendirmektedir. İrlanda'nın bu konumunu ortaya koymasının bir yolu da Birleşmiş Milletler UNRWA'ya verdiği tutarlı destektir. Diğer donör ülkelerin fonlarını çekmesine rağmen İrlanda Ajansa mali yardım sağlamaya devam ederek Filistinli mültecilere yönelik temel hizmetlerin sürdürülmesini sağlamaktadır. Bu taahhüt, İrlanda'nın Filistin halkının insani ihtiyaçlarını karşılama konusundaki kararlılığını ve uluslararası baskılar karşısında ilkelerinden vazgeçmeyi reddettiğini vurgulamaktadır. İrlanda'nın Filistin'e verdiği destek, Güney Afrika'nın Uluslararası Adalet Divanı (ICJ - International Court of Justice) nezdinde İsrail'e karşı açtığı davaya verdiği destekle de ortaya konmuştur. İsrail'in işgal ve yerleşim yerlerini genişletme politikasının yasallığını sorgulayan bu dava, İrlanda'nın uluslararası hukukun korunması ve devletlerin insan hakları ihlallerinden sorumlu tutulmasının önemi konusundaki duruşuyla tutarlıdır. İrlanda bu davayı destekleyerek adalete olan bağlılığını ve Filistinlilerin haklarını savunmak için güçlü çıkarlara karşı durma isteğini bir kez daha teyit etmektedir.

İrlanda, uluslararası sahnedeki eylemlerine ek olarak, çatışmaları yatıştırmak ve diyaloğu teşvik etmek için bölgesel güçlerle de diplomatik çabalara girmiştir. Mısır ve Ürdün gibi ülkelerle çalışan İrlanda, müzakereleri kolaylaştırmaya ve gerilimleri azaltacak ve anlaşmazlığın temel nedenlerini ele alacak tedbirler üzerinde fikir birliği oluşturmaya çalışmıştır. İrlanda'nın diplomatik çabaları, Filistin'in tanınmasını savunmak ve blok içinde anlaşmazlığa dair daha dengeli bir yaklaşımı teşvik etmek için benzer düşünen üye devletlerle birlikte çalıştığı Avrupa Birliği'ne de uzanmaktadır.

İrlanda'nın insan haklarına bağlı bir orta güç olarak uluslararası toplumsal yapıdaki konumu, kurumsal kimliğinin bir yansıması ve dış politikasının itici gücüdür. Tarihine, değerlerine ve çok taraflılığa olan bağlılığına dayanarak İrlanda, adaletin sesli bir savunucusu ve Filistin haklarının sadık bir destekçisi olarak kendine özgü bir rol biçmiştir. Bu rol barış, adalet ve insan onuruna adanmış bir ulus olarak İrlandalılık kimliğini pekiştirirken, İrlanda'nın küresel sahnedeki ahlaki konumunu da güçlendirmiştir. 7 Ekim sonrasında yaşananlar ve İsrail'in soykırıma varan saldırılarına İrlanda'nın verdiği yanıt, İrlanda'nın kurumsal ve sosyal kimliklerinin dış politikasını şekillendirmedeki kalıcı önemini göstermektedir. Filistinlilerin haklarını tutarlı bir şekilde savunarak ve Avrupa Birliği içindeki statükoya meydan okuyarak İrlanda, Batılı bir ülkenin İsrail-Filistin çatışması konusunda ilkeli bir duruş sergileyebileceğini göstermiştir. İrlanda'nın değerlerine ve tarihsel deneyimine dayanan bu ilkeli yaklaşım, onu diğer Batılı ülkelerden ayırmakta ve devlet davranışını şekillendirmede kimliğin önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, İrlanda'nın İsrail-Filistin anlaşmazlığına yönelik eylemleri adalete, insan haklarına ve çok taraflılığa olan derin bağlılığını yansıtmaktadır. Sömürge sonrası bir toplum olarak tarihine ve ahlâki değerlere dayanan İrlanda, kendisini Filistinlilerin haklarının ve uluslararası hukukun bir savunucusu olarak konumlandırmış; aynı zamanda barış ve adalet arayışında diğer ülkelere de örnek olmuştur. Bölünme ve kutuplaşmanın damgasını vurduğu bir dünyada, İrlanda'nın ilkeli duruşu, ezilenler için ayağa kalkmanın ve çağımızın en önemli anlaşmazlıklarından birine adil ve barışçıl bir çözüm için çalışmanın önemini hatırlatmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İrlanda, İsrail-Filistin meselesi, 7 Ekim, sosyal inşacılık, kimlik.

ABSTRACT

Ireland's Attitude towards Israeli-Palestinian Conflict after 7 October

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January 2025

This study aims to examine Ireland's attitudes concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict following the 7 October 2023 events and analyze the underlying factors that shape Ireland's responses and measures. It uses qualitative methods and constructivism theory to examine Ireland's approach to the conflict.

The study finds that Ireland's corporate and social identities significantly affect the country's foreign policy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Ireland's corporate identities, as reflected in the Irish Constitutions, portray the country as a post-colonial society, upholder of morality and justice, and supporter of multilateralism. These identities are further complemented by Ireland's social identity, shaped by the present international situation of the presence of colonialism, division of world countries, and strengthening of global justice norms – as a country committed to human rights. Together, these identities form Ireland's interests which drive its action in the international arena and are reflected in the foreign policy of Ireland.

These identities are reflected in Ireland's continued support for the two-state solution, unimpeded funding for humanitarian organizations in Palestine, condemnation of human rights violations, engagement with other international actors to de-escalate conflict, and advocacy for the upholding of international and law human rights within the EU.

Keywords: Ireland, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 7 October, social constructivism, identity.

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INTRODUCTION

Having lasted for decades and still continuing today, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict leaves thousands of people dead, displaced, persecuted, homeless, and become refugees. While the conflict is multifaceted, marked by deeply rooted religious, historical, and geopolitical complexities, in recent decades the conflict has grown and involves several aspects ranging from illegal settlements and control of borders by Israelis, freedom of movements of Palestinians, the status of Jerusalem, as well as difficulties of access faced by Palestinians for jobs, land and water, and public services in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt) (Human Rights Watch, 1998).

The dispute dates back to 1917 after World War I when the Ottoman Empire lost control over its territory. Afterward, Arthur Balfour, then-foreign minister of Britain promised the Jewish people a "national home" in Palestinian territory, the so-called Balfour Declaration. Before the declaration, Jews existed in Palestine in a small percentage. However, following the declaration migrations drastically accelerated with major waves of Jews coming to the region. Britain gained the mandate in Palestine but left the region in 1947 and transferred the unresolved task to the United Nations (Khalidi, 2021).

In 1948 Israel was established, which caused the eviction of a couple hundred thousand people from Palestine while also triggering conflict from neighbouring Arab countries and within the region. The 1948-1949 War, Suez Crisis, Six-Day War, Yom Kippur War, First and Second Intifada, and frequent Israeli aggressions against the Palestinians in the following years, including in 2009, 2012, 2014, and 2021, illustrate the perpetual conflict between two sides. Countries brokered truces, accords, and resolutions to seek answers and bring lasting peace to the region. Nevertheless, failures to uphold the agreements hinder the objectives. Apart from the failure of various peace agreements and therefore the goal of establishing everlasting peace in the region, Western nations

have a lengthy record of supporting Israel, which makes the country possess strong forces behind their back (Khalidi, 2021).

The recent conflict happening in the region was started by an assault conducted by Hamas, a resistant group controlling the Gaza Strip, on southern towns of Israel in an operation called "Al Aqsa Flood" on 7 October 2023. The operation aims to hold Israel accountable for its aggressions against Al-Aqsa, thousands of imprisoned Palestinians in Israel, increasing attacks by settlers on Palestinians and growing residential areas in the West Bank, and also the 16-year siege of Gaza. Saudi's normalization plan with Israel is considered the cause in the wider regional environment (ACLED, 2023). The 7 October attack involved infiltration from several directions (air, land, and sea), and began with the launch of a barrage of rockets (around 3000-5000) from different posts in Gaza. As the smoke heightened in the city, hang gliders made their way in, using explosives to pull down electric fences which allowed trucks, bulldozers, and other vehicles to breach the barrier system. At the same time, the line allowing communications with Israeli army headquarters was disrupted, leaving the Israel Defence Force (IDF) unable to respond quickly (Düz & Çınkara, 2023).

As the resistant group succeeded in encroaching on the barrier system, they moved into twenty-two locations, as far as 24 kilometres from Gaza. In the city of Sderot, gunmen rushed into housing areas, took over Israeli police stations, and attacked officers and civilians in the public areas, and the *kibbutzim*, traditional agrarian settlements in Israel. Some people were taken captive in Gaza, while several members of the group were still in the town and exchanged fire with the Israeli military until 10 October (Hjelmgaard, 2023). Attack by the resistant group was also carried out in Re'im, a site with the highest number of casualties, where people attended Nova music festival to celebrate the upcoming Jewish holiday of Sukkot. As the rockets started raining down, some panicked concert-goers managed to the parking lot and tried to flee the location, they

found themselves trapped in a jam with Hamas surrounding them (Schwarz & Willie, 2024).

The 7 October rocket barrage also reached the cities of Ashkelon and Ashdod, as far as Tel Aviv. On 14 October, the Israeli government reported that the casualties in the country reached 1.200, while the other 5.600 were injured and several hundred abducted. The scale and unprecedented nature of the attack were considered the deadliest attack on Israel since Yom Kippur War of 1973, and thus referred to as Israel's 9/11 (Cohen, 2023). The response given by Israel draws a parallel to what the United States did to Afghanistan and Iraq, thus giving legitimation to do so, under the name of the *Global War on Terrorism*.

Throughout history, Hamas' attacks and operations were responded to by Israeli counterattacks, and so did the current 2023-2024 operation. The counterattack, however, slowly became a genocide. Israel's counterattack to Hamas assault started on the evening of 7 October, name-coded "Operation Iron Sword", became a media with which the mass murder goes underway. The country officially declared "war" with Hamas, and swore they would pay a heavy price for the attack committed. On the same day, Israel launched airstrikes hitting different parts of Gaza, including the headquarters of the radio station, residential buildings, schools and mosques. Israeli reserves were mobilized to prepare for ground war with Hamas. Israel ordered a total siege of Gaza, without allowing humanitarian assistance or donor agencies to enter the enclave (ACLED, 2023).

Israel, having control over the borders and the access supply of power to Gaza, cut off water, food, electricity and fuel to the region. This leads to long queues for clean water and food, where people queue for up to 6 hours only to get a water supply. Moreover, wastewater and desalination facilities were turned off due to electricity and fuel shortages (Ahmed, 2023). As a result, healthcare facilities cannot function because of a shortage of power and lack of clean water for sanitation, while newly born and premature babies were not placed in

incubators as a result of power scarcity. The threat of infectious diseases also threatens public health, and the condition deteriorated as Israeli airstrikes did not stop bombarding Gaza since the first day of retaliation (WHO, 2023b).

While Palestinians grappled with limited access to water, food, and electricity, mass exodus materialized in Gaza. One million residents of Gaza City and the northern region moved in droves after Israel ordered people to move from the city to the southern part of the area, due to the possibility of a ground invasion. Amid warnings and airstrikes that occurred throughout the day, people carrying their belongings moved by car, truck and donkey carts crowding the main streets of Gaza. UN expert warns that ground operation and evacuation of people will lead to mass ethnic cleansing (OHCHR, 2023a). Unfortunately, while the population heeded Israel's order by flocking south, Israel bombed access to the south, including Khan Younis, Central Gaza, Najme Square, and Rafah itself (Thomas et al., 2023). The mass exodus occurred in the country often time referred to as the second *Nakba*, meaning catastrophe in Arabic, after the first one occurred in 1948 (Hawaleshka, 2024). In addition, Israeli bombardment also hit UN schools and facilities, hospitals, and churches where people take shelter from the non-stop air raid (Zraick & Harouda, 2023).

International communities also condemned Israeli attacks targeting healthcare facilities and hospitals, including the cancer ward of the Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital, which was then forced to shut down, an airstrike near Al Quds Hospital, causing internal glass to shatter and injuring 21 people, Indonesian Hospital killing 12, and also bombing power generator and solar panel at Al-Wafa Hospital. Moreover, Al Nasr and Al Rantisi Hospital were also affected by the strike. In the biggest hospital in Gaza, Al Shifa, the bombardment blew up the cardiac ward and killed more than a dozen Israel argued, without proof, that the facility is used by Hamas as a command center (Aljazeera, 2023b). The World Health Organization (WHO) strongly condemns Israeli attacks on hospitals that treat patients and provide protection for tens of thousands of

refugees, while UN Experts describe these actions as crimes against humanity as they violate the Geneva Convention (OHCHR, 2023b; WHO, 2023a).

By November 2024, the death toll reached more than 44.000 in the oPt while the number of injured is higher than 104.000 (OCHA, 2024). Referring to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) ceasefire voting at the end of October 2023, 120 states voted in favour, 14 voted out of favour, while the other 45 abstained (UN News, 2023). It is apparent that the hostilities in the region received different responses from countries: ceasefire was supported by the significant number of the Global South, but Western states comprising of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Austria, Netherlands, and the Germany, among others, voted against or abstained from ceasefire (UN News, 2023). Nevertheless, among the Western nations, there is Ireland, the United States' ally, who voted for a ceasefire, extended humanitarian aid, and called for a ceasefire on various international occasions including in the European Union (EU). That being said, Ireland is regarded as an 'outlier' among European Nations.

Ireland's support for Palestine officially started in 1967 when the country endorsed UN Resolution 242 which explicitly called for a full Israeli retreat (Doyle, 2008). Become an outlier among Western nations in this unrelenting conflict, Ireland was the first member of the EU to voice for the creation of the state of Palestine and the last country in the bloc to open a residential Embassy of Israel.

Ireland has advocated for the protection of international law and human rights throughout the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Not only from the government, this stance stretches extensively from ordinary citizens, academicians and non-governmental organizations, to members of parliament and politicians (EuroNews, 2023). However, this study will focus on the attitude of the country toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

With regard to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict following the 7 October attack, Ireland clearly condemned Hamas' assault but soon became one of the few EU countries to give an alert about Israel's actions. Subsequently, Ireland took several actions that were later considered crossing Israel's 'red line' and culminated in the closure of the Israeli embassy in Dublin in December 2024. Against this backdrop, a study is needed to examine what was taken by Ireland in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict following the 7 October event and the underlying reasons behind this attitude.

FIRST CHAPTER

I. Research Purpose

This study seeks to explore two key research questions:

First, what are the attitudes adopted by Ireland towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict following the events of October 7, 2023? *Second*, what are the underlying factors, or why, has Ireland undertaken such a stance?

The study aims to achieve several objectives:

Firstly, it seeks to analyse Ireland's attitude and the specific measures the country has taken in response to the conflict post-October 7, 2023. *Secondly*, it aims to understand Ireland's national identities and interests, as well as the rationale underlying its approach to the conflict. *Thirdly*, the study aspires to complement existing research on Ireland's role in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, providing fresh perspectives on its actions and motivations. *Lastly*, by providing insights into the changing dynamics of Middle Eastern issues and their global implications, it aims to advance the area of international relations.

II. Theoretical Framework

Constructivism

Emerging later in the International Relations' discipline, Constructivism offers a new lens in viewing interaction among states. In contrast to its predecessor theories which emphasized material aspects as well as scientific analysis to explain states' behaviour, constructivism emphasizes ideational aspects in understanding actions of states. This makes constructivism often considered "the middle way" that is able to explain *why* international actors act the way they do (Hadiwinata, 2017). The following section will discuss Constructivism as a theory in international relations. The discussion will start with a brief explanation of the

emergence of International Relations as a subject and the great debates that took place throughout its development. Subsequently, Constructivism will be discussed.

International Relations gained its momentum as an independent discipline following World War I in England when a group of experts in philosophy and international law in that country saw the need for a separate study that studied relations between nations. The aims are to obtain answers and provide a logical explanation of why wars occur and examine efforts to create world peace. In response to this, the University College of Aberystwyth in Wales introduced Sir Alfred Zimmern as the Woodrow Wilson Chair in International Relations (Hadiwinata, 2017). The discipline soon experienced rapid development in the following decades. This is characterized by the emergence of theories that attempt to explain how IR works and help determine the direction of development of IR studies. The development of this study, and Constructivism, cannot be separated from waves of Great Debates on International Relations which often make certain theories dominant over others (Kaya, 2008).

The First Great Debate took place between realist and idealist thinkers in the decade of the '40s because of the League of Nations' failure in stopping the outbreak of World War II. This debate focused on how to achieve international peace. The first debate made the argument that realism is superior to idealism/liberalism, which sees human nature as inherently bad and sees international politics as a struggle for power and interest. The Second Great Debate took place between traditional realism and behavioralism in the '50s and '60s due to the perceived lack of scientific methods of tracing history. The second debate focused on how to apply the scientific approach, which is value-free, in International Relations. In this period, positivism, which argued that the scientific method of the natural sciences could be applied to international relations, became dominant. The Third Great Debate occurred between positivism/rationalism and post-positivism/reflectivism/critical theory

approaches from the 1980s to the 1990s which essentially questioned the validity of dominant theories of international relations and marked the emergence of alternative theories so-called post-positivist or critical theories, such as post-modernism, feminism, critical theory, and constructivism (Hadiwinata, 2017; Kaya, 2008)

Theories that constitute the critical theory/post-positivist pole in International Relations, including Constructivism, are based on two key ideas: first, the fundamental structures of international politics are social rather than solely material; and second, these structures shape the identities and interests of actors, not just their behaviors. (Wendt, 1995). From an intellectual perspective, these theories have four common points. First, epistemologically, these theories question the positivist view of knowledge and reject the idea of objective, empirically verifiable definitive statements about the natural or social world. Methodologically, it appears that these theories do not accept the dominance of a single scientific method and advocate a plurality of views regarding knowledge production. These theories also ontologically challenge rationalist conceptualizations of human nature and activity (Kaya, 2008).

Constructivism, whose emergence is commonly associated with the third debate, is often time referred to as a middle ground between positivist and post-positivist theories, as it incorporates a positivist epistemology while adopting a post-positivist ontology. On one hand, Constructivism aligns with positivists in recognizing the unity of nature and society, but on the other hand, it emphasizes that society possesses its own distinct ontological character, relying on hypothesis testing and causality in its methodology (Arkan, 2014; Kaya, 2008).

Constructivism sees international politics as a product of social construction, emphasizing that actors are connected to their social environment and the shared values within it. It highlights the significance of social structures, the role of actors' identities in forming interests and driving political actions, and the

interdependent relationship between actors and the structures they operate within (Reus-Smit, 2005).

Social structure itself consists of three factors: shared understanding, material resources and practice (Arı, 2014). As the social structure is shaped by actors, and, in turn, shapes them, it is not fixed and can change. Actors construct social reality and reproduce it in daily relations. Constructivist argues that the social structure (history, culture, beliefs, political environment) actors live in, defines actors' identities. At the same time, actors construct this social structure and thus it is a mutual relation between them. Since the social structure is mainly ideational it has an intersubjective context or is transferable through interactions (Karacasulu, 2014).

Constructivism emphasizes the significance of ideational structure. However, it does not completely reject the assumption that the material world shapes human activities. In fact, material forces exist and cannot be ignored. It is only that Constructivism believes that material resources are not the most crucial element of social structures, as their significance for human actions is derived solely from the shared knowledge and context in which they exist (Wendt, 1995). Ireland, for example, chose to maintain neutrality not join any military alliances. From realist perspective, Ireland's neutrality might be interpreted as a result of the country's strong military power. Hence, non-alignment is a pragmatic choice to avoid entanglement in conflicts. However, from a constructivist viewpoint, Ireland's neutrality emerges from Ireland's deeply tied belief in its anti-imperial legacy and moral stance on peacebuilding.

- **Actor/Agent**

Constructivism argues that political actors or agents influence and are in turn influenced by the social structure in which they are situated, in short, agents and structure are mutually constituted (Reus-Smit, 2005). Agents are active participants in social life: it is individual or individuals who affect the material world with their activities. However, agencies do not necessarily have to be

individuals. The government of any country also consists of people and it is a social formation. A country is formed when a large number of people act as agents (Kaya, 2008). Structure, on the other hand, is *what* an agent operates within. It is possible to separate structure and agent for analysis purposes only. Social structures also affect the identities and interests of the political actors or agents, but the structure itself exists only with the practices of the actors (Reus-Smit, 2005).

- **Identity and Interest**

This approach of constructivism, which argues that international life is social rather than material, leads to theorizing international relations in a different way compared to its predecessors. Unlike previous theories which believe that national interest is given, Constructivism argues that states' identity is not fixed, but is shaped and constructed by shared understanding at both the national level and between states (Rumelili, 2023). In Constructivism, states are constructed as social actors with identities. Identity matters because it shapes states' definition of interest, which then drives states' actions.

There are two distinct identities of state: corporate or internal identity, and social or external identity. Corporate identity is derived from its historical experience and refers to qualities that constitute the agent's (or state's) individuality. While corporate identity serves as a motivational factor in *doing* or engaging in action, social identity can be understood as a set of meanings a state attaches to itself while taking the perspective of others that enable the state to determine "who I am" in a social structure of shared understanding. In this respect, social identity serves the cognitive and structural aspects. Thus, how a state satisfies its corporate identity is *dependent* on how it defines itself in relation to other states (Wendt, 1994). Agent's identity, in turn, will shape its interest and drive the agent's actions, which in this aspect, is foreign policy (Arı, 2014).

A defining characteristic of constructivism is its assumption that actors' identities and interests are shaped through social processes. Constructivism looks at how

the international system is structured and how states' identities and interests are connected, showing that they affect each other. (Rumelili, 2023).

To conclude, as Christian Reus-Smit explains, in understanding world politics constructivism proposes three arguments. *First*, as far as structure can influence the actions of political actors, constructivists argue that ideational structures such as beliefs, norms, and identities are of equal importance as material structures. It is stated that material assets *only* acquire meaning through shared ideas of human that is attached to that material. Friendship and enmity are shaped and influenced by ideas about identity and shared ideology. *Second*, constructivists believe that non-material structure influences actors' identity and shapes their interests which in turn determines the actions taken. Because identities are the basis of interest. This means a country will act in accordance with its identity. A democratic country (identity), for example, will enable multiparty and election (actions) while in a monarchy one will pass the throne to their descendant. *Third*, constructivists argue that there is a mutually constituted relationship between agents (political actors) and structure. On the one hand, they believe that ideational structure affects and influences the actions of the agents, but on the other hand, constructivists confirm that normative or ideational structure exists for the reason that it is shaped and has been practiced over a long period by the agents. According to Reus-Smit, constructivism emphasizes the importance of material and normative structures, the influence of identity on political behaviour, and the mutual interaction between agents and structures (Burchill, et al., 2005).

In the case of Ireland's attitude towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after 7 October, Ireland's history under British colonialism shapes its identity as a post-colonial society that supports the self-determination movement. In addition, *morality*, *justice* and cooperation among nations, as mentioned in the Irish Constitution, serve as a basis that features its approach to building relations with other states. These corporate identities, push Ireland to possess a social identity

of a middle-power country committed to human rights. Thus, against the backdrop of the presence of colonialism, polarization of states, and strengthening global justice norms, Ireland takes several measures that mirror its identities and interests.

III. Methodology

This research will employ a qualitative and descriptive approach to understand Ireland's attitude towards Israeli-Palestine conflict after 7 October 2023. Data collection involves analysis of various primary and secondary data sources. To examine Ireland's position on the conflict, primary data will be gathered from governmental debates, official speeches, and public discourses by Irish government representatives. These sources will provide insight into Ireland's stance and policy measures.

Context and a more thorough comprehension of the historical and geopolitical dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be provided by secondary data. This includes scholarly works that provide in-depth examinations of the conflict's background and wider implications, such as books and journal articles.

Additionally, ongoing developments in the conflict will be tracked using news reports and official publications from the United Nations and its affiliated bodies. These sources will help contextualize Ireland's responses within the broader international framework. By integrating these diverse data sources, the study aims to provide a well-rounded analysis of Ireland's attitude and actions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

IV. Literature Review

Previously, studies about Ireland's relations and support towards Palestine have been conducted by several authors. In light of the ongoing Israel-Palestinian conflict that started on 7 October, Brendan Ciarán Browne (2024) stated that the

historical parallel between Ireland under British and present-Palestine under Israeli occupation contributed to the instant deep connection between Irish and Palestinians. However, the author notes a striking difference between the two. In Ireland, eventual peace was finally achieved through a series of intense diplomacy supported by the international world which resulted in the Black Friday Agreement. Yet in Palestine, the idea of "peacebuilding" has often been used as a tactic to deceive. It served as a pretext for the violent Zionist settler-colonial project to spread throughout historic Palestine, while world communities looked on helplessly. Browne also notes the role of Irish' activist groups in advocating for Palestinian rights (Browne, 2024).

Joseph Slattery (2023) highlights the reason why Ireland did not recognize Palestine although the country had already endorsed the establishment of Palestine in 1980. Using a constitutive theoretical framework, he concludes that Ireland's decision not to recognize Palestine was shaped by political considerations rather than legal criteria. As the EU was preoccupied with geopolitical issues, divided over the Palestinian issue, and increasingly reluctant to maintain a cohesive foreign policy stance, Ireland struggled to keep Palestine's position on the EU agenda. In this context, Ireland refrains from acting unilaterally without achieving consensus. Ireland's refusal to recognize Palestine put the country at odds with Irish public opinion – which largely supports Palestinian independence. In fact, its commitment to multilateralism in foreign policy made it vulnerable to allies' geopolitical pressure (Slattery, 2023).

Fiani Nurmalasari and Ida Susilowati (2021) carried out research about the Irish non-governmental organization, the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC)'s role in the policy of banning imports of Israeli products. Using the concept of the Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN), the study found that IPSC was able to put pressure on the Irish government's foreign policy regarding the bill to ban the import of Israeli products, particularly using leverage politics and accountability politics. Nurmalasari and Susilowati highlight how IPSC as a

Civil Society Organization (CSO) plays a critical role in shaping governmental policy by exerting pressure through advocacy, mobilization of public opinion, and participation in policy dialogue, thereby significantly impacting the decision-making process. From leverage politics, IPSC seeks to advocate for various influential actors such as the Boycott Divest Sanction (BDS) National Committee, European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine (ECCP), Irish Network Against Racism (INAR), and Senator Frances Black from Sinn Fein Party as actors who have the potential in changing foreign policy of the Irish Government. From the accountability politics, IPSC submitted letters questioning the government's principles and commitment regarding the Irish government's foreign policy towards Palestinian people's human rights case. All the steps taken is proven to pressure Irish policy to be more Palestinian-oriented (Nurmalasari & Susilowati, 2021).

John Doyle (2008) writes about Irish nationalism and its support towards Palestine, particularly from the official position. Doyle notes that Ireland backed UN Resolution 242 and explicitly advocated for a full Israeli retreat from the Palestinian territories under occupation. This position of support has been upheld by successive governments and serves as the basis for consistent statements regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict. For instance, he states how in 2004 Foreign Minister Brian Cowen criticized in a very strong term the "Israeli security wall" during the Geneva Initiative and Arab League Plan welcoming statement. In addition, in 2006 Minister Dermot Ahern condemned the rising death toll and destruction in Lebanon, and the desperate conditions of the people of Gaza. The political support was accompanied by a rise in the aid budget which increased over time, and Irish foreign policy on Palestine. Additionally, Ireland's support was evident during its tenure on the Security Council, where it strongly affirmed its commitment to the rights of the Palestinian people (Doyle, 2008).

However, studies employing Constructivism to examine Ireland's attitude towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly after 7 October 2023, are still

scarce. Using the theory of Constructivism, this study aims to complement the previous research and studies to understand the rationale behind Ireland's actions.

V. Research Structure

This study consists of four three chapters and a conclusion. The *first chapter* of this study consists of three sections. The first section is the literature review, the second part is a theoretical framework that discusses Constructivism and the last part is methodology.

The *second chapter* discusses the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which consists of two parts. The first part covers the birth of the Zionist movement and the creation of the state of Israel. The second part discusses the 1948-1949 (First) Arab-Israeli War, the 1956 (Second) Arab-Israeli War, the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the 1967 (Third) Arab-Israeli War, the 1973 (Fourth) Arab-Israeli War, the 1982 Lebanon Occupation, the First Intifada, the Middle East Peace Process, the Second Intifada, Division in Palestinians' resistance, and Israel military operations.

The *third chapter* consists of two main parts. The first part examines Ireland's attitude towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after 7 October which covers condemnations towards Hamas and Israel, calling for and supporting ceasefire resolutions, funding humanitarian aid, diplomatic efforts with regional partners, requesting for the review of the EU-Israel Association Agreement, and the recognition of Palestine as a sovereign state. The second part discusses Ireland's attitude concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after 7 October through the lens of Constructivism. This part covers Ireland's history under British colonialism, Ireland's corporate identity, international social structure, and Ireland's social identity.

The final chapter of the study contains conclusions that include research results regarding the reasons underlying Ireland's attitude towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after 7 October.

SECOND CHAPTER

The History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Stance of Ireland

The conflict that stretched for more than a century between Israel and Palestine started with a letter from Arthur Balfour in the British government's name to one of the most prominent European-Jewish families, Rothschild, to grant the Jews a national home in Palestine. However, the idea of building a Jewish country had taken some steps earlier, since the late 19th century.

In this context, the establishment of Israel in 1948 is considered a milestone and is examined under two subheadings the period before and after 1948. The period before 1948 examines the emergence of the Zionist cause and the situation of the Palestinian territories under British mandate and ends with the Partition Plan accepted by the UNGA in 1947. The period after the official establishment of Israel in 1948 is examined under a separate heading within the framework of various turning points, the majority of which have been shaped by hot conflicts, until today. The Post-1948 period includes the 1948 (First) Arab-Israeli War, the 1956 (Second) Arab-Israeli War or the Suez Crisis, the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the 1967 (Third) Arab-Israeli War or the Six-Day War, the 1973 (Fourth) Arab-Israeli War or the Yom Kippur War, the First Intifada, the peace process, the Second Intifada, and then the sections dealing with the post-Intifada period.

I. Period Before 1948

A. The Establishment of the State of Israel

The widespread antisemitism in Europe had caused Jewish people to experience persecution, exclusion and oppression in various countries over the continent. The Jewish community faced rejection that they had to move from one area to another. Returning to the *homeland* and establishing a Jewish state was merely a dream for the European Jews (Karataş, 2020). It was in 1896 Theodor Herzl, an

Astro-Hungarian Jew, wrote a book titled "The Jewish State", which stated that to fight antisemitism they had to, not only leave Europe but also form their own state. A year later in 1897, the first European Jews Congress in Switzerland was initiated by Herzl, which was attended by 208 delegates with the main intention of creating a Jewish state. To attain their objective, they raised money to fund immigration, as well as formed Jewish committees to advocate and lobby the governments of their countries to support their goals. The 1897 Congress marked the birth of the modern Zionist political movement: a political movement with the aim of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine (Köse, 2018).

In the past, Jews were advanced in money-lending, banking, and finance which also influenced the development of this sector in Germany, France, Italy and Ottoman (Gerber, 1981; Pascali, 2016). This brought them to substantial positions and higher status, particularly in the Ottoman, USA, and UK. With regards to the UK, the religious beliefs of influential politicians and strategic considerations following World War I and of Suez Canal made Britain have a good relationship with Jews and Zionists thus advocating for the Jewish cause (Köse, 2018; Terry, 2017). While some arguments suggest that the spread of antisemitism and persecution of Jewish people throughout Europe were the reasons supporting the goal of creating the '*national home*', others stated that it actually was a Western project as a buffer state to control the Middle East (Karataş, 2020). In November 1917, a month after the fall of the Ottoman in Palestine, the British government declared its support for the Zionist movement in a letter written to Rothschild and affirmed that they used their best efforts to the benefit of this object (United Nations, n.d.-b).

Following World War II, the League of Nations was created by the Allies and territories that were once under Ottoman and Germany were distributed to be under its members' supervision, called '*tutelage of advanced nations*', until they attained independence (Crozier, 1979). The present-day Palestine (then called Transjordan) was given to the British at the San Remo Conference in 1920 and

approved by the League of Nations and the British Parliament in 1922 (Arı, 2017a). Together with this mandate, the number of Jewish populations rose drastically in Palestine which brought dissatisfaction among Palestinians (Karataş, 2020; Sinanoglou, 2009). The frustration of Palestinians with the 15 years of mandate's obscurity in the region and the growing Israeli population led to a six-month general strike, which developed into a 1936-1939 revolt (Kabha, 2003; Khalidi, 2021).

In 1939, when the situation worsened due to rebellion, by 1939, Britain published the White Paper, Britain proposed dividing the region into two states for Jews and Palestinian Arabs, limiting land purchasing and immigration for Jews, and that Palestine would be granted independence (Sinanoglou, 2009). Even more shocking for the Jews was a sentence contained in the White Paper, stating that "*His Majesty's Government therefore now declare unequivocally that it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish State*". The decision, argued by Cleveland was a step that needed to be undertaken by the British against the backdrop of *first,* deadlock for a solution between the Palestinian Arabs and Jews in Palestine, and *second*, the increasingly involved Arab states in this issue while in the same time, good relations with Arab countries must be maintained because the oil resources they have were crucial to winning the war (Cleveland, 2013). The White Paper, thus, created the first rift between Zionists and the British, while Haganah killed Palestinians. In that time, 10% of adult Palestinian men had been killed, arrested, or injured (Khalidi, 2021).

The tension heightened, but the world was distracted by another major event: World War II. Therefore, the Zionists had no choice but to ally with Britain. Hitler had invaded Poland and the Jews were fleeing Hitler's terror in large numbers. Therefore, despite the anger towards the White Paper, they naturally did not support Germany in the war. In this matter, Ben Gurion declared that Israel would fight alongside the British as though the White Paper did not exist, and once the war was over, they would oppose the White Paper as if the war had

never occurred (Cleveland, 2013). During the war, six million Jews died in Nazi death camps, while others fled Europe to Palestine. The immigration continued despite British limitations on the number of immigrants. In November 1947 the UN issued Resolution 181, terminating Britain's mandate on Palestine no later than August 1948 and partitioning the territory into Arab and Jewish states with Jerusalem under UN governance (United Nations, n.d.-a). The events surrounding this period, particularly the Nazi atrocities against the Jews, World War II, and the White Paper measures, resulted in American Jews, once opposed to the idea of a national homeland, giving overwhelming support for the realization of a Jewish state (Cleveland, 2013).

Different views about the British ending mandate and departure from Palestine were given by both Zionists and Palestinians. For Zionists, Britain departed with full awareness that it meant allowing the National Home to be attacked by surrounding Arab countries. Meanwhile, for Palestine, Britain's departure was an open invitation for the Zionists to take over the Palestinian territory and turn it into a Jewish state. The only common view that was shared between the two, was that the conclusion of the British mandate would result in a clash between the parties (Shlaim, 1987). With regards to the partition, 11.100 square kilometers of the territory (42%) went to Palestinians, 14.100 square kilometers (56%) went to Zionists, and the remaining 2% consisting of the cities Jerusalem and Bethlehem were to be under the international administration. In response to the resolutions, civil war broke out in Palestine until May 1948, which led to a greater Arab-Israeli War. Zionists, on the other hand, accepted the partition (Nikitina, 1973).

As the conclusion date of the mandate in Palestine was set, Britain's power in the territory was also declining. The governing power began to be rarely involved in the conflict between two parties. Meanwhile, Zionists' acceptance of the partition came with another plan to annex other territories, more than what had been determined by the UN. In the subsequent years, the annexation of Palestinian

territories by Israel caused hundreds of thousands of people to flee and be expelled from various Palestinian districts to become refugees in other areas or surrounding Arab countries, known as *Nakba* (Khalidi, 2021; Munayyer, 1998).

It merits attention that the Palestine-Israel issue had entered the Irish government in 1923, only two years after their own independence. Maurice George Moore was the first senator who raised the issue of the British mandate in Palestine in the Senate debate. Senator Moore particularly noted how the mandate would disadvantage the native inhabitants of the region (Palestinians) (Houses of the Oireachtas, 1923). In 1937 Peel commission proposed partition of Palestinian land into Jewish and Arab states. This particular recommendation was noticed by Irish Prime Minister at the time, Eamon de Valera, who stated that land partition would likely bring more trouble rather than solving it (McCarthy, 2005).

II. Period After 1948

A. The 1948 (First) Arab-Israeli War

On 14 May 1948, the night of British departure from Haifa, Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion announced the creation of the State of Israel. The next morning, neighboring Arab states including Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt supported by the Arab Liberation Army, entered Arab Palestine and invaded areas allotted to the Jews. During the war, several truces and war resumptions took place. The invasion by several Arab forces marked the beginning of the wider Arab-Israeli War.

On the Israeli side, the 1948 war is often referred to as the "Total War" or "War of Independence". It was seen as an effort that would not only determine the fate of the Jewish state and the aspirations of the *National Home* but also a determining factor that would affect the future of the Jewish population as a whole. Mobilization of personnel and the Jewish community was started as soon as

October 1947. In preparation for the conclusion of the British authority and the onset of war in Palestine, a defense strategy was established, and the community was mobilized both materially and spiritually (Naor, 2008).

Concurrent with the first Arab-Israeli war, several military operations were conducted by the Israeli army to attack Palestinian villages and spread terror across the country. In Deir Yassin, a region near Jerusalem, over 100 people were killed in the great brutality. Men were killed, women and children undressed, queued up, photographed and killed with automatic firing (United Nations, n.d.-c). The incident was followed by a mass flight of Arabs from their districts. During this period, similar massacres took place in Jaffa, Haifa, Tiberias, Safad, and with each massacre another entire community fled their village, fearing they would be the next (Bregman & El-Tahri, 1998).

By late May, the UN called for a cessation of hostilities and established the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). Supervised by Count Folke Bernadotte, the truce was reached on 11 June and lasted for 28 days. However, the two parties used the four-week ceasefire to rearm and improve their position, violating the terms of the truce. Israel bolstered their forces by importing arms from Czechoslovakia, which in return, really determined Israel's fate, which was well expressed by Yitzhak Rabin, who that without the armed support from Czechoslovakia, he doubted that Israel would have been able to go to the war" (Bregman & El-Tahri, 1998).

When the ceasefire period ended, both parties re-engaged in the war, known as the Ten-Days Battle. Egyptian air forces bombed Tel Aviv and attacked Israeli villages. However, the attack was less significant in impact compared to what Israel did. Israel, on the other hand, used the opportunity to attack the villages of Lydda (Lod) and Ramla which, according to the partition, goes to the Arabs. The village had been a hideout for refugees from Jaffa and surrounding villages, who were forcibly evicted by the Zionists. The tragedy of Lydda and Ramla took place for three days, marked by sporadic resistance from Palestinians, indiscriminate

shooting by Israeli forces, and forced expulsion of the population. By the third day, under the order of Ben Gurion, Israeli soldiers forced all civilians of Lydda and surrounding villages, including Ramla, to leave the area. As a result, 70.000 people marched out for ten to fifteen miles in high July noon, with sacks on their heads, and dehydrated. In the city, more than a hundred died, while an estimated 350 people died of thirst and exhaustion during the eviction in an incident known as Lydda Death March (Bregman & El-Tahri, 1998; Munayyer, 1998).

The second armistice was agreed on 18 July, which lasted until 15 October. In this phase, Count Bernadotte suggested a new partition plan of Palestine in the part of Negev, Galilee, Lydda and Ramla, free zones of Haifa and Lydda airport, as well as rights to return for Palestinian refugees. However, both parties rejected the plan and the next day Israel paramilitary group, Lehi, shot dead Count Folke Bernadotte and a French UN advisor sitting next to him. Ralph Bunche was assigned to fill in Bernadotte's position (Stanger, 1988). As the second truce expired, the war resumed until early 1949 and armistice agreements were signed separately between Israel and Arab countries. The settlement with Egypt was made on 24 February, with Lebanon on 23 March, with Jordan on 3 April, and with Syria on 20 July. Meanwhile, Iraq, which does not have a direct border with Israel, did not have a specific agreement with the country and withdrew its troops by March 1949 (Ben-Dror, 2020). The agreement with Arab countries resulted in an armistice agreement called the "Green Line"[1] commonly known as the 1967 line, in which Gaza goes to Egypt and the West Bank goes to Transjordan respectively. The line also separated areas controlled by Arab countries from the ones that were under Israeli control (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014)

The first Arab-Israeli War lasted nearly 10 months with the victory on the Israeli side. The war ended with Israel controlling the territory the UN had given to the Jews, as well as 60% of what the UN had granted to the Arabs. Gaza was under

[1] The Green Line refers to the 1949 armistice boundaries established through separate agreements between Israel and Egypt, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Syria. It is also known as the 1967 line, highlighting the ceasefire boundary that existed before the June 1967 War.

Egypt's administration while the West Bank went under Jordan's authority. Israel claimed that the first Arab-Israeli war that led to the displacement of the Palestinians occurred because they adhered to the command of their Arab leaders (Shlaim, 1995). However, as Beinin and Hajjar said, the exodus of Palestinian people was mostly caused by fear and terror carried out by Israeli paramilitary groups, as happened in Deir Yassin, Lydda, Jaffa and other areas. Only 5% of Palestinians left their area because they obeyed orders from Arab troops (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014).

B. The 1956 (Second) Arab-Israeli War: The Suez Crisis

The second Arab-Israeli War was an event where Britain, France, and Israel invaded Egypt over the Suez Canal issues. The canal, which was completed in 1869, became an important instrument in the world economy, particularly for the British and French. However, Gamal Abdel Naser's decision of nationalization of the Suez Canal hindered Western interests, which urged Britain and France to invade Egypt. After the Suez event, decolonization in the Middle East became inevitable for Britain. It marks the decline of the British reign as the world's traditional power, the rise of the United States as the new world power (Sener, 2023; Spyer, 2004), and the first occupation of Gaza by the Israeli army (Masalha, 1996).

In the 1950s world countries were divided into two blocs; each one sought to influence other countries to take sides with them. Egypt, which previously sided with Britain, shifted closer to the Soviet Union during President Nasser's government. Nasser's tendencies to the Eastern Bloc were also visible from the designed one-party rule in Egypt, purchasing arms from the Soviet's satellite Czechoslovakia in 1955 and the appearance of the communist newspaper El-Missa in 1956 (Johnson, 1972; Lahav, 2015; Spyer, 2004). Furthermore, Egypt announced diplomatic recognition of Communist China. This caused the US, alongside the UK and the World Bank, to extract their funding for the Aswan

High Dam project in early 1956 (Dougherty, 1959). In response to this, in July 1956 Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. This was seen as an opportunity to channel financial supplies to Egypt to continue the construction of the dam (Spyer, 2004). It is stated that the US' withdrawal of funding for the project was a turning point in changes in political relations between Western countries and the Arabs. Had the country not withdrawn its funding, the canal would not have been nationalized, the invasion would not have occurred and the pro-Western regime of Arab countries would not have been torn by civil unrest (Dougherty, 1959).

On the other hand, although an armistice agreement had been signed between Egypt and Israel in 1949, the former did not recognize the latter. Egypt managed to blockade the Suez Canal, the main instrument for Western commercial activities, and to prevent all commercial activities in and out of Israel by closing the Tiran Strait all the way to the Gulf of Aqaba for all Israeli ships. Moreover, Nasser permitted Palestinian *fedayeen* (guerillas) to launch attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip and supported the Palestinian guerillas. The nationalization of Suez that hampered British and French interests, combined with Israel's frustration over the blockade led to the plan to invade Egypt (Lahav, 2015; Spyer, 2004).

The plan for the invasion was carried out in secret in October 1956 in Sèvres between England, France and Israel. Afterwards, an agreement was reached for Israel to strike the Egyptian army at Suez, followed by intervention from Britain and France. The two countries will become peacemakers who separate the warring parties and protect the international waterway, followed by a plan to overthrow Nasser's government (Lahav, 2015; Moran, 2019). As arranged, Israel attacked Egypt in Sinai which was followed by an ultimatum from Britain and France for cessation of hostilities. Once Egypt refused, which had been predicted by the colluding parties, Britain and France invaded Egypt on 5 November. Unfortunately, the written agreement regarding the invasion plan, which Britain

failed to destroy, was discovered. Thus, despite Israel's success in carrying out its actions, Britain and France could not deny the collusion (Moran, 2019).

However, according to Spyer, Israel's military success in defeating Egyptian troops and controlling all of Sinai was the starting point that changed Britain's view of Israel. Israel, until that time, was seen as a country whose survival was still questionable. After the 1956 Sinai invasion, it became clear that Israel had the strongest military in the region. As a matter of fact, Israel has, since then, been seen as a country capable of being a powerful deterrent for surrounding Arab countries and capable of protecting Western interests in the region (Spyer, 2004).

The United States and Russia strongly opposed the invasion, and the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 997 calling for a weapons embargo, a ceasefire, the withdrawal of all soldiers beyond the truce line, and the reopening of the Suez Canal. The United States even threatened to impose economic sanctions on the invading nations if they did not leave Egypt's borders. England and France finally withdrew their troops by March 1957. Israel, which originally intended to stay in Sinai and Gaza, what the Israeli government considered an integral part of Israeli land, withdrew after strong international and American pressure. However, the country regained free navigation over the Strait of Tiran and the Canal (Masalha, 1996).

On the Palestinian side, the Second Arab-Israeli War marked the first of Israel's invasion of Gaza. The occupation lasted for four months, characterized by the widespread massacre of Palestinians by the Israeli army, particularly at the beginning of the occupation. In early November 1956 when the Egyptian military surrendered, Israel attacked civilians in Khan Younis and Rafah, killing nearly 400 people. The motive was believed to be similar to the ones that happened in Deir Yassin that is for the populations to flee. Furthermore, there were plans to integrate Gaza's economy into Israel and change the currency (at the time Egyptian) to Israeli currency. However, the outcome of the war was a disappointment as the population did not flee as they did in 1948 (Masalha, 1996).

In the year surrounding the Second Arab-Israeli War in 1955, Ireland joined the UN, which was welcomed by the Arab States, as Ireland was neutral in the Cold War and opposed imperial practice due to its history. After the war in 1957, then-Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank Aiken focused its attention on Palestinian refugees and collected donations for the UNRWA (McCarthy, 2005). In addition, Ireland sent its troops to the UN peacekeeping force for the first time in Lebanon in 1958 and has not withdrawn its troops since then (B. Ryan, 2023).

C. The Creation of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

Nearly a decade after the second Arab-Israeli War, at the Arab League summit in 1964, PLO was created. It was a response to various events that occurred in the region and to channel the aspirations of the Palestinian people. As argued by Hamid, after the war Palestinians found themselves in an unusual situation of having a strong sense of national identity but lacking the national and political institutions to represent it, which was a result of the policies implemented by the British during the mandate period (Hamid, 1975). Another important factor to note regarding the creation of the PLO was the dissolution of the United Arab Republic between Syria and Egypt to which Palestinian political activists were committed. This shook their confidence in the possibility of Arab unity (Shemesh, 1984). The same doubts eventually occurred in the following years, which made the Palestinian people realize that they could not pin their hopes on the unity of the Arab states.

With the aforementioned factors being said, the PLO becomes the general framework under which all Palestinian organizations including professional associations, trade unions, commando groups and also prominent national figures work together to achieve Palestine's national goals. The organization stands as an umbrella for various Palestinian organizations (Hamid, 1975). Some of the key organizations within the PLO included the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation

of Palestine (a faction split from the PFLP), Saiqa, and Fatah, which was led by Arafat. Fatah was the largest and most influential group within the PLO as a whole (Said, 1980).

The initial objectives of the PLO were opposing Zionism, achieving self-determination, and establishing a Palestinian State which included the liberation of Palestine and the elimination of Israel. The goals, however, later changed throughout various Arab-Israeli wars, as one can recall how the organization's territorial claim declined and its recognition of Israel's right to exist in 1993 through the Oslo Accords. Division in the Palestinian forces and PLO's realization of the lengthy task of fighting Zionism to create independent Palestine were among the factors that altered the objectives. The goal, as argued by Shu and Hussein becomes short-staged, more pragmatic, and complicated (Shu & Hussain, 2018). With regard to this, Edward Said argues that although Palestinian politics are sometimes bloody and sometimes clear, there has always been a unified commitment to achieving self-determination and independence. The more remarkable thing is that Palestinians have consistently refused to surrender, abandon their struggle, or accept domination or occupation without resistance (Said, 1980).

In the years after it was founded, the PLO was acknowledged as the legitimate voice of the people of Palestine, which at the time was under the control of Egypt and Jordan. This recognition allowed the PLO to take part in political talks and agreements related to Palestine. Later, in 1974, the PLO was officially accredited as the only Palestinians' envoy by the Arab League, and the organization went on to establish offices in more than a hundred countries (Khalidi, 2021).

D. The 1967 (Third) Arab-Israeli War: The Six-Day War

The third Arab-Israeli War involving Egypt, Syria, Jordan, dan Israel lasted for 6 days, from 5 to 11 June 1967. The war resulted in the crushing defeat and humiliation of Arab troops, showing the military superiority of Israeli forces, and

the resignation of Gamal Abdel Nasser from his position. The Six-Day War caused a tripling size of Israel: occupying all of Palestine, the Golan Height and Sinai. Another inevitable result was the movement of Palestinian refugees which affected political difficulties in the following years (Al-Rodhan et al., 2011; Machairas, 2017).

Tension in the region again heated due to speculation that Israel would attack Syria. Previously, in early 1967 the Ba'ath party in Syria overthrew the ruling regime and used a more combative approach towards Israel. The party was also responsible for helping Al-Fatah in sabotage operations, which Israel warned to retaliate if the actions continued. However, other factors such as clashes over the use of the Jordan River, Israeli field cultivation in the demilitarized zone and plowing over the disputed land contributed to growing hostilities (Al-Rodhan et al., 2011). On 12 May of that year, Russia misinformed Egypt that the Israeli army was about to attack Syria, and expected Egypt to take necessary steps (Simon & Simon, 2017).

Confident of its military forces, President Nasser commanded the Egyptian army to stand by on the frontier and ordered UNEF to leave. Nasser also informed Syria and Jordan to prepare for war and signed a military pact with Jordan. The conflict escalated by the time Egypt enforced a blockade on Israeli ships from passing the Tiran Strait, which was considered a bit too far. Israel had previously stressed that the closure of Tiran would be considered as an act of war. Egypt heeded an order from the UN that neither party should start the war, but this was not the case with Israel, who went to war on 5 June. The country stormed the Egyptian air base, Jordanian air base, and Syrian army destroying 85% of Egyptian military equipment, 179 tanks and more than 3000 vehicles in Jordan, as well as in Syria, numbered 180 and 1200 respectively. Military casualties heavily favored Israel with an approximated ratio of 25 to 1 (Machairas, 2017).

Israel's desire to go to war at that time was a matter of debate due to significant differences in views of leaders of the military and politics. The former stood on a

more hostile stance to deal with Arab neighbors whereas the latter intended to obtain a diplomatic solution to the crisis. However, despite the debate among top officials, Israel went to war. On 11 June of that year, all military actions stopped. As the war concluded, Israel managed to occupy Sinai, the Gaza Strip, then administered under Egypt, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. Israel was tripling in size and within striking distance of enemies' capital (Al-Rodhan et al., 2011; Machairas, 2017)

The direct impact of the 1967 war on Palestinians was the increase in displaced people. People who chose to stay were under occupation and were governed under strict military law. Land was confiscated to be used as settlements for Israeli residents in the West Bank and Gaza. After the war, Arab countries realized that they could not liberate Palestine militarily, and thus set for lesser goals (Machairas, 2017). On the other hand, Palestinians realized that they could not depend on Arab countries for their fate, as seen by the rise of nationalism of Palestinians and the shift from demonstrations to armed resistance. Several resistance groups also increased after 1967, including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Al-Sa'iqa, and the Abu Nidal group. There is also inter-Palestinian rivalry due to ideological differences. Resistance groups from fleeing Palestinians and having their base outside Palestine are a threat to host countries because from within the countries they conducted guerilla attacks on Israel, while the continued occupation radicalizes Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank(Al-Rodhan et al., 2011). The most violent clashes between the host government and Palestinian guerrilla organizations took place in Jordan, where the PLO headquarters were located after the war. After the PFLP hijacked four civilian airliners in September 1970, clashes erupted between the Jordanian army and the guerrilla organizations, and all Palestinians were expelled from the country – an event known as Black September (Cleveland, 2013).

Within the region, Egypt, Syria and Algeria cut diplomatic ties with the US, while Lebanon, Kuwait and Sudan withdrew their ambassadors from the US and the

UK. Oil-producing Arab countries announced an embargo on the two states. The 1967 War was not merely a defeat of the military of Arab nations. As argued by Rodhan, the victory of Israel showed not only fragmentation and lack of unity within the Middle East and their military defeat. More than that, it sounded like the death of Pan-Arabism, which was later proven by the defeat of Egyptian and Syrian troops in the next war (Al-Rodhan et al., 2011). Israel's victory made the West, especially the US, view Israel as a new regional power and an important ally. US' relations with Israel, which were previously informal, entered the "special relationship" phase since then (Machairas, 2017).

Prior to the war, Ireland recognized Israel *de jure* in 1963. However, the two countries do not yet have diplomatic relations. Following the war, Ireland echoed UN resolution 242 and called for Israeli troops to completely withdraw from the seized regions. Then-Irish Prime Minister Frank Aiken stated that in order to reach a settlement, Israeli forces had to return to the June 4 lines, which were the borders that existed prior to 1967, and any agreement had to be enforceable and backed by the UN and the majority of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. According to Prime Minister Aiken, Israel "had no right whatsoever to annex the territory of its neighbors," even while it was entitled to self-defense (McCarthy, 2005).

E. The 1973 (Fourth) Arab-Israeli War: The Yom-Kippur War

After the defeat in the 1967 war, Arab countries tried to reclaim their territories from Israel. Egypt and Syria particularly, did not accept the result of the war which left Israel controlling all of the areas it had captured in the 1967 War (Rodman, 2001). The fourth Arab-Israeli War took place on the observance of Yom Kippur, Jewish holiest day, between Israel and Arab countries led by Egypt and Syria. Although Arab forces initially dominated the war, Israeli forces managed to turn the tide and came out as the victor. However, Egypt regained

control over Sinai and signed the treaty of Camp David, which brought lasting peace to both sides. PLO was also acknowledged as the only Palestinians' envoy.

The war began on the afternoon of October 6 on Yom Kippur day, when Egypt sent troops across Suez to Sinai while Syrian troops attacked in the Golan Heights. Warning on the impending war were given to Israel by King Hussein who flew to Tel Aviv. Nevertheless, then-Prime Minister Golda Meir thought that full mobilization was not necessary, and decided only to keep a few troops at the border, which was so-called "*suffering from the hubris of victory of the Six-Day War*". Ultimately, with the IDF caught off guard and Israeli intelligence "fell asleep" during Yom Kippur, Israel was vulnerable to attacks from the opponents with support from the Soviets (Shapira, 2023; Shlaim, 1976). After the initial victory of Arab armies, Iraqi, Moroccan, and Jordanian armies joined fighting for Syria (Bar-Joseph, 2009).

Seeing Arab advances, Israel turned to the US for assistance, which the US answered on 14 October by transferring 12.000 tons of advanced military machinery to Israel which altered the situation. By 17 October Israel already reached the western bank of the Suez Canal (Levey, 2008). In Syria, Israel not only expelled the Syrian army from Golan but also brought Israeli forces to within artillery range of Damascus (Rodman, 2001). The UNSC called for a ceasefire twice, with the first on 22 October to fail after Israeli violations nearly sparked a confrontation between the Soviets and the US. On October 24, the ceasefire officially took effect and direct talks between Egypt and Israel took place (Tzabag, 2007).

The impact of the 1973 war went beyond the Middle East. Arab members of OPEC, championed by Saudi Arabia embargoed oil to the United States and European countries supporting Israel. This decision led to oil shortages and skyrocketing oil prices in these countries, which lasted until early 1980 (Bar-Joseph, 2009).

The role of Palestinians in the operation led by Egypt and Syria was also significant. In fact, the leadership of the PLO was previously informed to prepare for *another* Middle East war in May and provided with an exact date in September of 1973. PLO officials left for Cairo a couple of times to discuss details of the war, one of which Sadat asked to prepare *fedayeen* whose role is to commit acts of terror from within Israel, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank. The goal was to disrupt the supply line of Israel while it was facing the Egyptian front. Throughout the war, *fedayeen* carried out more than 200 attacks and were also said to have fought alongside Egypt and Syria against the Israeli army. The involvement of the Palestinians in this matter gave rise to the recognition of the PLO as the solitary spokesperson of the Palestinians. According to the plan, the PLO would also be involved in the Geneva conference held after the war. However, because it was deemed not to have a mature political plan, the organization was denied from joining the meeting. This also makes Palestine aware of how important the position of the US is in everything that concerns Israel (Shaul Bartal, 2015).

After the war, the conflicting parties agreed to meet in Geneva in December to negotiate solutions. However, the conference failed due to Syrian absence. Ultimately, the US Department of State Henry Kissinger conducted shuttle diplomacy with Israel and Arab states which brought forth military disengagement signed by Egypt and Israel in January 1974. Israel's withdrawal from Egypt was also carried out in stages, from the west side of Suez in January, right after the shuttle diplomacy, and another withdrawal in September 1974. The 1979 Egypt-Israel peace agreement was the result of the Camp David Agreement, which Egypt and Israel signed in September 1978. In April 1982, Israeli soldiers made their final retreat. However, Egypt's relations with other Arab countries underwent a significant shift as a result of this peace deal. The Arab League's headquarters were moved from Cairo to Tunisia, and Egypt was censured and expelled. In 1989, Egypt was finally allowed to rejoin the League (Lavy, 1984).

With regards to Syria, disengagement talk was more difficult but eventually agreed in May 1974. Israeli forces retreated 60 square kilometers from Golan, occupied Syrian territory during the war, and a buffer zone was established (Bar-Joseph, 2009).

On the Israeli side, the 1973 war was a traumatic event. With the number of deaths exceeding three thousand, compared to the few hundred in the 1967 war, the myth that Israel could not be defeated was shattered, and this affected the government's authority. Protests were held demanding officials at the time, particularly Golda Meir, then-Prime Minister and Moshe Dayan, then-Defense Minister be removed from their posts in the Labor Party (Pappe, 2007).

To put Ireland in context, despite having recognized Israel *de facto* in 1949, and only recognized Israel *de jure* in 1963, diplomatic relations between the two countries were also only established in 1975, making it the last country in the EU to do so (B. Ryan, 2023). It was the time after Ireland's accession to the EU in 1973. On the other hand, Ireland became the first country in the organization to support the creation of a Palestinian state in 1980 (McDermott, 2023). Following Irish troops' deployment to Lebanon in 1978, several Irish troops serving in UN peacekeeping forces were killed by Israeli forces, which strained relations between the two countries (McCarthy, 2005).

F. The 1982 Lebanon Occupation

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which began in June 1982, known as Operation Peace for the Galilee, was another major war between Israel and Palestine, rather than the Arab Army, since 1948. After the Black September, the Palestinian guerrillas as well as the PLO moved their bases from Jordan to Lebanon, where around 300,000 Palestinian refugees lived (Cleveland, 2013). The general plan of the invasion was to destroy the *fedayeen* and the Syrian army in southern Lebanon, which frequently carried out small-scale attacks on Israel. However,

the Israeli invasion involved a completely different scale, duration and losses (Khalidi, 2021).

In carrying out its operation, Israel coordinated with the Lebanese government, which was led by Christian Maronites and shared Israel's animosity for Palestinians and Syrians' presence in Lebanon. It deserves attention that there was a civil war in Lebanon before the invasion and that sectarian government arrangements continued to favor Christians, while the majority of Shia and Sunni Muslims were largely ignored. The ruling Maronites were unwilling to share their political position with fellow Muslims. This led the Muslims in Lebanon to associate themselves with Palestinians who opposed the status quo (Arı, 2017b; Cleveland, 2013). During the operation, Israel rapidly advanced towards Beirut, where the PLO headquarters were located. This resonates with Khalidi's statement that Israel was trying to destroy the organization because destroying it would also destroy Palestinian nationalism in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem (Khalidi, 2021).

The massive destruction and protests in the country led to an understanding that the PLO had to leave Lebanon, with promises to protect the Palestinian civilians who stayed. But two weeks later, the newly elected Maronite Phalangist president was killed. Even though Israel had promised to keep Palestinians in Lebanon safe, they gave permission Christian Phalangists to enter the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, where thousands of Palestinians, among them women and children, were killed (Cleveland, 2013).

The Sabra and Shatila massacre in September 1982 was an incident that also affected the Israeli-Palestinian issue during this period, when the PLO's efforts to defend the Palestinian cause became difficult. 3,000 Palestinians were killed in two days in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by right-wing Lebanese militias that cooperated with Israel, which invaded Lebanon in June of that year with the aim of destroying the PLO. The massacre drew international condemnation, further strained the Palestinian cause, and temporarily strained US-Israeli

relations (Khalidi, 2021). In the words of Tayyar Arı, the occupation was a paradox of the name given to the military operation: because Israel burned another country's capital, devastated its economy, and killed thousands of civilians in the name of "Peace of Galilee" (Arı, 2017b).

G. The First Intifada

Derived from Arabic, *Intifada* means "shaking" which portrays the uprising of Palestinians against Israeli occupation. There were two intifadas throughout the Israeli occupation. The first, known as the Stone Intifada, started in 1987 and ended in 1993, while the second, known as Al-Aqsa Intifada, started in 2000 and ended in 2005. Both uprisings were handled by the Israeli army using excessive use of force.

The catalyst for the outbreak of the first intifada was the collision of an Israeli army truck with a car of Palestinian laborers going back from Israel, which led to the death of four Palestinians. This ordinary incident was like the final straw that broke the camel's hump for Palestinians who, for twenty years since 1967, had lived under Israeli military occupation which led to major demonstrations (Ülgül, 2016). Edward Said wrote a similar notion about the cause of the uprising. It was frustration due to continued occupation, humiliation, evictions, land expropriations, growing illegal housing areas in the Gaza and West Bank, economic hardship, and deportation. In addition, the Arab Summit held in Amman a month earlier shifted their focus from the Palestinian cause towards the Iran-Iraq War. As a result, Palestinian nationalism increased and they relied on their own strength to fight against Israeli occupation (Said, 1989).

At the beginning of the demonstration, Palestinians took non-violent actions such as mass protests, work strikes in Israel and refusal to pay taxes (Baycar & Atar, 2021). The only violent action during the Intifada was stone-throwing by Palestinians. In fact, considering the treatment they were subjected to, stone-

throwing could be considered a symbolic act of violence rather than an actual act of violence, and it became a symbolic act of the First Intifada. In response, Israel responded brutally by sending armed forces against the demonstrators. Other measures taken by Israel included mass arrests, salary cuts, curfews, and deportations from the country. The actions adopted by Israel drew international attention to the nature of Israel's occupying role in these territories. The force used by Israel was highly disproportionate compared to the Palestinians (Smith, 2013). The first intifada also marked the birth of *Harakat al Muqawwamah Al-Islamiyah* (Hamas), an Islamic resistance group whose aim throughout history was to liberate Palestine, although this goal began to change from the mid-1990s onwards. Hamas operates in the military, political leadership and social activities, and is the current ruling party in Gaza (Roy, 2003).

H. The Middle East Peace Process

The First Intifada concluded with the signing of the Oslo I Accord in 1993, which initiated the Oslo peace process between the PLO and the Government of Israel. Signed by Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin, the agreement was known officially as "Declaration of Principles (DOP)". It is stipulated in the agreement that the PLO acknowledged Israel as a state, committed to abandoning terrorism, and pledged to refrain from actions that could undermine the peace process. In exchange, Israel acknowledged the PLO as the rightful spokesperson of the Palestinian people and consented to collaborate with the PLO under the framework of the Middle East Peace Conference (Arı, 2017a). Furthermore, Israeli troops would retreat from parts of Gaza and Jericho in the West Bank, while the Palestinian Authority (PA) would be established to administer these areas which were planned to become a full Palestinian state. The DOP, which came into effect one month after its signing, will have a period of transition for five years (Arı, 2017a).

However, Edward Said, who opposed the Oslo Accords, foresaw the tragic situations that would occur after 1993 with what he called as a "common sense approach" in his article in the *London Review of Books* in October 1993. He even called the agreement the "Versailles of Palestine", a tool for the surrender of the Palestinians. Edward Said regretted how the PLO had been able to negotiate a better agreement than one that required so many unilateral concessions to Israel for at least fifteen years. Furthermore, he wrote how Palestinian leaders and intellectuals constantly called the agreement a 'victory' while Israel had given nothing, and how the PLO admired Israel (Said, 1993). Nevertheless, agreements were made after agreements.

Following the first agreement, the second agreement, Oslo II, was signed in 1995, which included a wide range of negotiations, including economic cooperation, interim self-government arrangement, settlements, military withdrawal and a declaration of common principles (Shlaim, 2013). Oslo II also covered agreement on the territories under Palestinian control in the occupied West Bank, areas under joint Israeli-Palestinian control and areas under Israeli control. Part of Oslo II, the Wye Memorandum signed in October 1998, stated that Israel would retreat from 13 percent of the West Bank. This would give Palestine full control over 18.2 percent of the West Bank, while 21.81 percent would remain under Palestinian civilian control and Israeli military control. However, Israel would retain full public control over 60 percent of the West Bank. Despite the agreement, Israel delayed implementation until November and had withdrawn only 2 percent of the West Bank by the end of that month (Arı, 2017b).

The creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel was meant to be the outcome of the Oslo Accords. Nevertheless, this goal was never achieved. The peace process brought little change, particularly after Yitzhak Rabin's assassination and Netanyahu's rise to power, as Israel refused to honor both agreements. The occupation intensified, illegal settlements expanded, and Palestinian movement became increasingly restricted. Palestinians also criticized the accords for

recognizing Israel's right to exist without securing recognition of a Palestinian state in return. These issues, along with the breakdown of the Camp David Summit, played a key role in sparking the Second Intifada in 2000 (Smith, 2013).

As Ilan Pappe argues, the so-called peace process was actually a new American jargon borrowed from the business world, built on cost-benefit principles and without any reference to moral values, using the word "Peace Process" as a "buzzword". According to Noam Chomsky, there was no peace process in fact, and this jargon allowed the US to intervene very comfortably as the coaches of the so-called 'process'. He also states that this did not mean that there was a comprehensive attempt to resolve the conflict, but that the progress in the negotiations and even the negotiations themselves became more important than the results (Pappe, 2007).

It is important to note that the Oslo peace process also sent a positive signal to Ireland. This was evident from Israel finally opening a residential embassy in Dublin in 1993, right after the peace process began, after previously establishing diplomatic relations in 1975 (McCarthy, 2005).

İ. The Second Intifada

The Second Intifada began after Ariel Sharon, an Israeli Prime Minister candidate, visited the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and declared that the Temple Mount would remain under Jewish control forever. Palestinians viewed this visit as deeply provocative, which sparked protests and stone-throwing. Sharon's security forces cracked down on the demonstrations, leading to Palestinian deaths. In a few days, the second uprising took place in which Palestinians engaged in riots, protests, stone-throwing, and suicide bombings. On the other hand, the Israeli military responded with heavy military operations, firing demonstrators with live ammunition and rubber bullets, using helicopter gunships and tanks, arresting suspected Palestinian militias, and implementing

curfews. The Israeli military also targeted medical personnel and their marked vehicles, killing civilians in protected religious areas, and intentionally harming unarmed children. Moreover, a separation wall[2] was built, dividing Israeli and Palestinian neighborhoods which caused a few thousand Palestinians unable to access their fields and workplaces (Falk, 2000; Smith, 2013).

The Second Intifada was characterized by a higher level of violence compared to the first. During this period, violent acts such as suicide bombings took place. However, as Ali Adam points out, the violent reactions of the Palestinians were something that Israel deliberately created. The escalation was unsurprising, particularly following Al-Aqsa visit by Sharon and Camp David negotiation breakdown over Jerusalem's status and Palestinians' right for return. It is also necessary to look at how the Peace Process, which was expected to result in the establishment of an independent Palestine, actually came to a deadlock again. In contrast, the number of illegal Jewish settlements increased from 200,000 to 400,000 between 1993 and 2000. According to Adam, heavy military responses were used to reduce Palestinian demands in the negotiations following the Camp David Summit (Adam, 2020). Adam also notes how Israel intensified the second intifada by firing over 1 million rounds of ammunition in the first few days, despite Palestinian violence being minimal during the same period, which resulted in huge Palestinian casualties. It was Israel that militarized the intifada and aimed to drag the Palestinians into a military conflict. Israel's aggression and the level of fatalities on the Palestinian side did not allow the non-violent nature of the intifada to be maintained (Adam, 2020).

In early February 2005, the Sharm El Sheikh summit attended by PA Leader Mahmoud Abbas, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Jordanian King Abdullah II took place to address the 4-year

[2] The separation wall, also known as the apartheid wall and security fence, is a wall that was built in 2002, in the heat of the second intifada, and is planned to extend for approximately 700 km. Israel has claimed that the wall was built for security purposes, especially to prevent suicide bombers from entering Israel. However, the real reasoning is that it was designed to facilitate the growth of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, as almost 90 percent of the wall deviates from the Green Line.

intifada. Abas and Sharon agreed to stop all acts of violence against one another and reiterated their dedication to the peace process. Later, Israel pulled most of its troops out of Palestinian territory, and the Palestinians stopped attacking Israelis. Both parties' actions eased tensions and signaled the end of the Second Intifada, despite the fact that no formal deal was made (United Nations, 2005).

Unilateral withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank was made by Israel in August 2005 to the 1967 Green Line. The actions taken involved the removal of Israeli settlement and evacuation of over 8000 settlers, and also retreat of the Israeli military from the area. The decision was considered historic since it was initiated by the Likud (the right-wing political party in Israel) and Ariel Sharon "the father of settlements". However, according to Rynhold and Waxman, it was a cunning political tactic to boost Sharon's national popularity, reduce international pressure on Israel, and prevent further withdrawal from the West Bank (Rynhold & Waxman, 2008). It has also been said that worries over Israel's demographic problems were the primary factor in the decision to leave. Calculations at the time predicted that by 2010, there would be more Palestinians than Jews residing in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. If the majority of Palestinians decided to demand voting rights rather than seek their own state, this raised the possibility that Israel may turn into a bi-national state. Retrenchment from all of Gaza and portions of the West Bank was therefore considered the only practical way to guarantee a Jewish majority in Israel for the long run. Therefore, this retreat was a political ploy that would resolve Israel's demographic issue on its own (Rynhold & Waxman, 2008).

A similar claim was made by Ian Lustick. 8,000 Jewish residents were living in Gaza during the second intifada. However, as Gaza's population surged to 1.5 million and numerous suicide bombings targeted Israel, withdrawal from Gaza became the next big idea to solve the demographic problem. Lustick quoted a letter written by Arnon Soffer to Ariel Sharon: *"There is only one solution to face the*

suicidal neighbor: disengagement". Its absence meant the end of the Jewish state (Lustick, 2019).

In advance of the outbreak of the Second *Intifada*, then-Irish Prime Minister Patrick Ahern paid a visit to Palestine in 1999, while Irish politicians met with Yasser Arafat between 1999 and 2003. In 2000 Ireland opened a representative Office in Ramallah, while Palestine also opened one in Dublin. Following the break of the Second Intifada, Ireland stood out among other EU states: endorsing Arafat and supporting a UN investigation into the actions of the IDF (McCarthy, 2005). Ireland also used its position in the Security Council in 2001-2002 to promote Palestinian rights (Doyle, 2008).

In the following years, relations of the two countries remained challenging. In 2010 an Israeli diplomat was expelled from Dublin after connecting fake Irish passports to suspects in the murder of Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, Hamas official. In the same year, MV Rachel Corrie, an Irish ship named for the American activist killed by an Israeli armoured bulldozer, brought relief for Gaza but was intercepted by Israeli security forces (B. Ryan, 2023).

J. Division in the Palestinians' Resistances

In 2006, Hamas unexpectedly won Palestine's legislative elections, defeating Fatah, the largest party in the Palestinian Authority. Ismail Haniyeh became prime minister and Mahmoud Abbas acted as the president of the PA. However, because Hamas refused to recognize Israel's existence and previous arrangements between Israel and the PA, the US rejected the election results and boycotted the Hamas government. Tensions between Hamas and Fatah escalated after the election (Roy, 2003). After a civil war broke out between the two groups between 10 and 15 June 2007, Hamas defeated Fatah and took over the Gaza Strip. As a result, the oPt's government became divided, with Hamas controlling the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip and Fatah controlling the West Bank (Smith,

2013). However, as Noam Chomsky argued, the civil war was actually provoked by the US and Israel in order to overturn the elections that brought Hamas to power. The Western powers' support for Fatah's armed forces was effective in triggering this civil war (Chomsky, 2010). Following Hamas' victory, Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza, restricting the flow of people and goods into the region, including food, fuel, and medical supplies, creating the world's largest open-air prison. This led to frustration and desperation among the people (Rynhold & Waxman, 2008).

Although both Fatah and Hamas share the same goal of liberating Palestine, the differences between Fatah and Hamas lie in their ideology and the means to achieve it. Highly influenced by the period of the Cold War and the liberation movement, Fatah is founded on secular ideology combined with nationalist rhetoric of anti-colonial discourse. By the time of its establishment, Fatah promoted armed struggle although this slowly changed and ultimately accepted coexistence with Israel. The ideology of Fatah also tends to be flexible and free to adopt and abandon ideological basis seen as suitable by its officials (Løvlie, 2014). In the same period, PLO leader Arafat was invited to speak at the UN General Assembly, which was considered the greatest diplomatic success in Palestinian history. However, despite these successes, the PLO failed to win over the American public, which Khalidi argued was the most important audience as the public opinion of the world's superpowers, in the face of Israel's rhetoric equating the Palestinian people with terrorists (Khalidi, 2021). In the end, the PLO declared in its landmark 1988 statement that an independent Palestinian state would be established in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem serving as its capital. It also recognized Israel's right to remain inside its pre-1967 boundaries (Cleveland, 2013).

On the other hand, the development of Hamas cannot be separated from that of the Muslim Brotherhood, whose founders believed that loyalty to Islam was superior compared to loyalty to a nation. With this belief, the Muslim

Brotherhood took up a wider issue than Egypt, which was then under British colonial rule, and included the Palestinian issue among its own concerns. This was clearly seen in the Palestinian uprising of 1936 when the Muslim Brotherhood contributed to fundraising and propaganda in support of the Palestinians. However, when President Nasser came to power, he restricted Islamic organizations in Egypt and Gaza – which was then under Egyptian rule. On the other hand, Fatah and the PLO were established and became the official delegations of Palestine. Nevertheless, in the 1970s and 1980s, secular Pan-Arabism and the PLO weakened: the former was defeated and lost popularity, and the latter began to use diplomatic channels, which bowed to the United States (Baconi, 2018). These events coincided with the revival of Islam in the region. Using remittances from the Palestinian diaspora, the Muslim Brotherhood reemerged in the occupied territories and began to establish civil institutions that would accelerate social renewal. After its registration as an Islamic organization to the Israeli authorities, Israel immediately gave its approval in the hope that it would produce a counterforce that could weaken the Palestinian nationalist movement (Baconi, 2018).

The Brotherhood planned to move to armed struggle as the Israeli occupation and settlements deepened and acted on the understanding that the Islamization of society and resistance, which were initially planned to occur sequentially, could go hand in hand. The outbreak of the first intifada was a turning point in the implementation of the plan: Hamas officially became operational in January 1988. Although initially conceived as a branch organization, Hamas expanded rapidly and in August of that year issued its charter detailing its goal of liberating Palestine, its refusal to recognize Israel, and its political ideology of Islam (Baconi, 2018). However, both Fatah and Hamas have evolved and changed since their founding. Fatah, historically dominant in Palestinian politics and originally secular, has grown more religious in response to the rise of Islamism. Hamas, on the other hand, has abandoned its fundamentalist rhetoric, its absolutist land

demands, and its reliance on violence as a solution to the Palestinian issue (Løvlie, 2014).

Since 2007, various reconciliations have been reached between the two sides, including the 2011 Cairo Agreement to end the conflict between the two sides, the 2012 Doha Agreement to establish an interim national reconciliation government, the 2014 Gaza Agreement to establish a national unity government, and the 2017 Cairo Agreement to implement the 2011 agreement and create a Palestinian unity government. However, the 2017 agreement, which aimed to end the decade-long separation, failed again due to different terms in the understanding of the compromise (Middle East Monitor, 2017). The Moscow Meeting in 2019 and the latest compromise since 2020 have yet to show any signs of resulting in unity between the two sides.

Before the October 7 War, Fatah and Hamas signed the 2022 Algiers Reconciliation Agreement and began talks on a reconciliation process, including presidential elections in 2023. However, no elections were held because a new Israeli-Palestinian conflict began (Aljazeera, 2022). As the crisis in Gaza worsened, reconciliation talks between the rival groups resumed in April 2024. In the meeting hosted by China, both sides agreed to address the long-standing division and work together for Palestinian unity. Although the meeting did not result in a direct solution to the crisis, Beijing views Palestinian unity as the most essential necessity for the long-term success of achieving a Palestinian state. In particular, the host country has begun to see Hamas as a rightful political force in the future state structure of Palestine and should be included in the political process (Sun, 2024).

K. Israel Military Operations

Israel is, in fact, similar to other colonial projects that displace the indigenous population. However, in the case of Israel, the process of closure and annexation

of the Palestinians continues to the 21st century. Therefore, the *Nakba*, which began on May 15, 1948, is not a one-time event, but a continuing one with military operations to this day. The current ruling party, Likud, is dedicated to the Judaization of Al-Aqsa and the West Bank. Below are the military operations carried out by the Israeli army against the Palestinians in occupied Gaza:

1) 2009 Cast Lead Operation

The tightening blockade in Gaza and the issue that Israel and the US-funded Fatah to destroy Hamas in the strip led to clashes between Hamas and Fatah, as well as with Israel, mounting from late December 2008 to mid-January 2009. This was also regarded as the first major armed struggle between Hamas and Israel. Israel conducted an operation named "Operation Cast Lead" which included non-stop air and naval bombardment, airstrikes hitting dozens of Hamas security posts, and a ground invasion in Gaza. Israel unilaterally ceasefire on 18 January, which was then followed by Hamas (Mansour, 2009).

In his writing, Noam Chomsky stated that both the prelude and conclusion of the operation were planned meticulously. The attack started shortly before noon just the time when children went back from school and people filled the road, easily killed and injured hundreds. In addition, it was on Saturday, urging the UNRWA to announce that Israelis refused to allow aid shipment to Gaza as they observed the *Sabbath*. The conclusion of the assaults, in which Israel unilaterally retreated was shortly before the inauguration of President Obama – to avoid critics of the crime (Chomsky, 2010). The war caused nearly 1500 Palestinians to die, hundreds of infrastructures destroyed, and thousands of Gazans to become homeless (Amnesty International, 2009).

2) 2012 Pillar Defense Operation

In November 2012, Israel and Palestine resumed hostilities following the Gaza War of 2008. In response to an escalation in rocket fire from Gaza, Israel initiated the "Pillar of Defense," another significant military operation. However, Palestinian resistance groups pointed to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as the siege of Gaza, as causes of the rise in rocket fire (Lappin & Lazaroff, 2012).

"Pillar of Defense" operation aimed to destroy Hamas' capability to attack Israel and to stop rocket raids from Gaza which, argued by Israel, targeted Israeli civilians. Israel carried out the operation with airstrikes, missile bombs and ground invasion (IDF, 2017). However, as stated by Human Rights Watch, the military operation was disproportionate, indiscriminate of civilian and military objects, and caused major casualties to ordinary citizens. The airstrikes were launched without lawful justification and legitimate military targets at the site (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Hamas, on the other hand, also indiscriminately fired rockets, amounting to more than 1500, towards civilians in Israel, making both sides accused of war crimes. The conflict lasted for eight days, with 6 dead and around 200 injured in Israel, and more than 150 dead and around 900 wounded in Palestine (Stein, 2013). The truce was reached on 21 November with the mediation of Egypt, in which Israel and Palestine must stop hostilities towards each other. However, the killings by Israeli soldiers and occasional rocket fire by Palestinian militias still took place, leading to the next major conflict in 2014 (Bayeh, 2014).

3) 2014 Protective Edge Operation

In mid-2014 more than 2000 Palestinians were killed when Israel and Hamas re-engaged in combat in Gaza. Israel blamed the Palestinian militia for the kidnapping of Israeli youngsters in the southern West Bank, which set off the violence. The action was seen as an act of revenge over the abusive treatment of

Palestinian prisoners, desperation over land-grabbing in Jerusalem and living under military occupation (Abboushi, 2014). Israel responded by carrying out mass arrests across the West Bank. Following this, Hamas retaliated with rocket assaults from Gaza, and countered by Israel with a full-scale operation named "Protective Edge". Israel launched an air raid and ground invasion to destroy Hamas' tunnel. The conflict lasted for seven weeks before the new armistice agreed, and caused extensive destruction in Gaza, hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians (Pradhan, 2023).

Israel and Palestine have been engaged in clashes since the 2014 war, which have included killings, detentions, the use of tear gas, the use of rubber bullets and live ammunition by the IDF, and stone-throwing by Palestinians. The protests, which were initially peaceful, joyous, and attended by multigenerational families, were peaceful, joyful, and featured food vendors, acrobats, and even *dabke* dancing. However, the situation quickly descended into violence after Israeli forces responded with tear gas and live ammunition (Wispelwey & Jamei, 2020). There were many clashes between the IDF and civilians, especially on important dates such as May 15, or *Nakba* Day, and May 14, when the US embassy moved to Jerusalem. During the protests, more than three hundred Palestinians, including children, lost their lives and more than thirty thousand Palestinians were injured (C. Jones, 2023).

4) 2021 Guardian of the Wall Operation

In 2021, a crisis broke out in Gaza again during Israel's "Guardian of the Wall" operation, which began on May 10 and ended on May 21 of the same year. The Israeli Supreme Court's ruling to relocate six Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah in the West Bank set off the violence. After Palestinians threw stones at Israeli police, the police entered Al-Aqsa and injured hundreds of people with sound bombs, rubber bullets, and tear gas. Hamas retaliated by giving Israeli security forces an ultimatum to leave the Al-Aqsa compound, but this ultimatum

was ignored. The next day, Hamas fired rockets at Israel, but no one was injured (Holmes & Beaumont, 2021). Israel responded by launching airstrikes on Gaza, hitting 150 targets, including schools, health facilities and refugee camps, killing more than 250 people and injuring thousands. Clashes also erupted in the West Bank. Finally, a ceasefire was reached on May 21, brokered by Egypt, Qatar and the UN (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

5) 2022 Breaking Dawn Operation

In early August 2022, Israel conducted another military operation, called Breaking Dawn. The operation, which Israel claims was a preemptive strike aimed at weakening the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), was carried out without warning because Israeli soldiers had arrested Bassam Al-Saadi, a prominent PIJ leader (Rapoport, 2022). Israel launched 147 airstrikes and hit 170 PIJ targets, killing 46 Palestinians, a third of whom were children, and wounding 360. In response, the PIC fired more than 1,000 rockets, most of which were intercepted by the Israeli dome; several dozen people were injured, with no reported casualties. The clashes lasted three days and on 7 August, with Egyptian mediation, Israel and the PIC agreed to cease hostilities, successfully preventing a "full-scale" war (UN News, 2022).

6) Post-7 October 2023: Sword of Iron Operation

By December 2024, the conflict which began in October 2023 had claimed more lives than any prior Arab conflict with Israel in the previous four decades. This was the deadliest for the Palestinian people since 1948 and markeded a major escalation in the century-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Stack, 2023). The October 7 War began with a planned offensive by Hamas and was met with relentless Israeli airstrikes, bombardments, and ground operations that caused extensive destruction in Gaza. Housing, refugee camps, schools, worship places and hospitals were damaged, medical supplies were cut off, food was limited,

and medical equipment in hospitals ceased operating due to a lack of electricity and fuel. All of this is worsening the already dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, home to 1.5 million Palestinian people (Ahmed, 2023).

Per November 2024 the war has claimed more than 44. 000 Palestinians, and over 104.000 injuries (OCHA, 2024). However, as Netanyahu said the war will not end until the Islamist group (Hamas) no longer controls the strip, ceasefire is still out of sight (Middle East Eye, 2024). Since mid-May of 2024, Israel has attacked Rafah – the last resort in which one and a half million Palestinians seek shelter, the action UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine Francesca Albanese stated it would amount to massacre (United Nations, 2024c). The scale of the war, as well as the huge number of casualties, made the current Israeli-Palestinian War called the Second *Nakba* (UN Press, 2024).

The atrocity of the war was further confirmed by the Report of the UN entitled "Anatomy of a Genocide" which stated that the patterns of violence (killings, mutilations, destruction of infrastructure, detainment with inhuman treatment, and force-displacement) indicate that the threshold has been met for declaring Israel to have committed acts of genocide. The scale of the attack on Gaza, as the report proceeds, indicates an intention to physically destroy Palestinians as a group. Not only did Israel hit military targets, but it also considered the entire society of Gaza, including protected groups and the infrastructure that supports their lives, as terrorists or supporters of terrorism and could therefore be killed. This led to the deliberate and irreversible destruction of society and the fabric of life in Gaza for the entire population. Israel's actions in Gaza, described as genocide against Palestinians, represent an intensified stage of an ongoing process of settler colonialism aimed at erasing their presence (United Nations, 2024b). The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) also reported that around 96% of Gaza's population would experience "high levels of acute food insecurity through September 2024." As long as the violence persists and humanitarian access is restricted, there is a strong risk of famine (IPC, 2024).

Along with the relentless attacks on Gaza, however, the current war is said to have changed the public's views as demonstrations continue across the world demanding a ceasefire. Public opinion has also shifted with more and more people participating in demonstrations and showing solidarity with Palestine. This shift, agreeably, is also seen in high officials as larger support towards Palestine were shown by European countries, including Ireland.

Ireland has adopted a number of stances that reflect its stance on the Israeli-Palestinian issue during the time of Israel's military operations in the oPt. A motion advocating for the state of Palestine's recognition was approved by the Irish Parliament in 2014. However, the Irish government said that unilaterally recognizing Palestine as a state is a big move that needs to be carefully considered, hence the decision was not made. In addition, Ireland believed that it would be more impactful if a significant number of EU countries recognized Palestine simultaneously since it would have greater political impact and pressure (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2014). The Occupied Territories Bill, which was sponsored by Senator Frances Black, was also approved by the Irish Parliament in 2018. The purpose of the measure was to prohibit the sale and import of products made in Israeli illegal settlements in the West Bank (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2018). Furthermore, in 2021, the Irish Parliament acknowledged Israel's de facto annexation of Palestine after the 2021 Israel-Palestine crisis. This very measure put Ireland as the first EU member to use the phrase "de facto annexation" about Israel's actions in the oPt. Israel, undoubtedly, bittered by Ireland's move stated that it was a baseless position (Holmes, 2021).

THIRD CHAPTER

Ireland's Attitude towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict after 7 October

A new chapter in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict began with the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7. Per November 2024, it has caused more than 44.000 deaths and over 104.000 injuries. Ireland, a Western European country, and a member of the EU is considered an "outlier" in approaching this matter. The following chapter will discuss Ireland's attitude and taken measures in approaching the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after 7 October, and the analysis of the attitude using Constructivism theory.

I. Ireland's Attitude following the 7 October Attack

A. Condemnation towards Hamas and Israel

Condemnation over Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October 2023 was carried out simultaneously by European Union member states, including Ireland. In Ireland, several key figures including the Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Tánaiste (Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs), and prominent politicians and leaders of political parties condemn Hamas' attack causing 1.200 deaths and taking over 200 hostages. However, shortly after, criticism turned to Israel for collectively punishing the Gaza population.

Then-Prime Minister Leo Varadkar stated that Ireland unequivocally deplores the 7 October attack and that the fighting should stop immediately. Hamas' attack, he continued, is atrocious and so is the impact on the people of Israel (Ó Cionnaith, 2023). Varadkar later turned his condemnation towards Israel, particularly during his visit to the US in March 2024 (McGee, 2024). Giving a similar tone, Tánaiste Micheál Martin also condemned Hamas' assault. By 7 October evening, he stated that Hamas's attack on Israel was a violation of international law and thus self-defence was permissible for Israel. However, he emphasized that it must be done proportionately. The Tánaiste also noted how

the situation in the oPt deteriorated significantly, particularly the settlement expansion, and now after the 7 October attack, he fears for the people of Gaza. He asked all involved parties to de-escalate as soon as possible (Ní Aodha, 2023). Ireland's permanent representative to the UN, H.E. Ambassador Fergal Mythen also condemns both Hamas and Israel, during the Open Debate of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) held on 24 October 2023. Irish Ambassador further stated that Ireland is deeply concerned about the potential for further regional escalation and violence (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2023).

On the domestic level, the newly resumed conflict in the Middle East has received a more varied response. Condemnation emerged both from Dáil[3] and Seanad[4] of Ireland, as well as political parties. During the Seanad debate, for example, senators strongly condemned both the attacks carried out by Hamas as well as Israel's unlawful response of bombing, killing, and land operation towards Gaza (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2023c). A similar attitude was shown during the Dáil Debate, held on the same date, in which the MPs condemned Hamas' assault on Israel which was then followed by critics of Israel's counter-attack on Gaza. Both Senators and Deputies call for a ceasefire and international intervention afterward (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2023b). It is also important to note that condemnations were expressed repeatedly in the debates, during which the Israeli-Palestinian issue was discussed.

Mary Lou McDonald, the leader of Nationalist's Sinn Fein, outrightly condemns Hamas' action on Israel including the taking of hostage. However, she also said that Israel's continued bombing of Gaza is also unacceptable. While not directly condemning Hamas, Sinn Fein's Foreign Affairs and Defense spokesperson, Matt Carthy, stated that Hamas must stop its armed actions and Israeli forces to stop

[3] The Dáil Éireann (often referred to simply as the Dáil) is the lower house and principal chamber of the Oireachtas, Ireland's national parliament. Each of its 160 members, known as a Teachta Dála (TD) or Deputy, is chosen to represent a constituency throughout the country.

[4] The Seanad Éireann (commonly referred to as the Seanad or Senate) is the upper house of the Ireland's national parliament. Its members, known as senators, are selected through a combination of methods, including election by panels representing various sectors of society, appointment by the Prime Minister and election by graduates of certain universities.

attacks on Gaza. A rather different tone was given by Sinn Fein's MP Chris Andrews who said that the attack did not happen out of thin air but was the result of murder, inhumane treatment of Palestinians, and the failure of the EU, within which Ireland is a member, for not holding Israel accountable of the apartheid regime Israel imposed on Palestinians (McGee, 2023).

The Green Party also denounces Israel's ongoing massacre of civilians in Gaza and Hamas' illegal attack on Israel. Indeed, Vincent P. Martin, the party's spokesperson for foreign affairs, said that attacks on defenceless civilians are never acceptable and that he hopes the acts will be tried as war crimes (Green Party, 2023). Apart from the Green Party, a quite different comment was expressed by People Before Profit who regretted the Irish government's stance of condemning Hamas' attacks first rather than Israel's in the Dáil Debate on 18 October. In its statement, People Before Profit said that the root of the assault is in fact Israel's long-standing practice of punishing Palestinians for daring to question the Zionist project while it even refuses to recognize the people of Palestine. In addition, the party condemns Israel's public statement of its intention to commit war crimes of collectively punishing the entire population of Gaza (People Before Profit, 2023).

The wave of condemnations from all parties again came in May, as Israel bombed Rafah – an area in which 1.5 million Palestinians seek refuge and live in tents. Both Taoiseach and Tánaiste said that Israel's action is barbaric and unconscionable. The Tánaiste, in particular, conveyed his condemnation in Belgium during the EU foreign ministers meeting.

The strongest comment, in fact, came from the newly-elected Taoiseach, Simon Harris, in early April 2024 after he stepped into office. During his talk at the University of Galway, Simon Harris condemned Israel's deliberate action of creating famine in Gaza and commented that it is a spectre that no Irish person can bear. In his following statement the Taoiseach addressed it to Israeli Prime Minister, stating as follows: "*Prime Minister Netanyahu, the Irish people could not be*

clearer. We are repulsed by your actions". He then demanded a ceasefire right away and the secure delivery of aid to Gaza. Over two thousand people, who were present at the ceremony, praised the declaration (Regan, 2024).

It can be seen that although the condemnation given by officials and political parties in Ireland differs in decree, they all uttered words of condemnation, towards both Hamas and Israel. Some parties even emphasized that Hamas' action is, in fact, a response to years of imprisonment imposed by Israel against Palestinians.

B. Calling for and Supporting Ceasefire Resolution

Along with condemnation directed at both Israel and Hamas regarding the 7 October attack as well as the counterattack done by Israel, Ireland called for an immediate ceasefire several times in domestic, regional, and international fora. The ceasefire statements were not only conveyed at the beginning of the conflict but also reiterated repeatedly whenever Ireland had the opportunity to voice its concern about the Palestinian issue.

In a resolution urging a "immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce" between Israeli forces and Hamas in Gaza, Ireland joined 120 other nations in voting for a ceasefire during the UNGA conference on October 27 (Moloney & Nichols, 2023). During the UNSC Open Debate on October 24, just three days prior, Ireland's permanent representative to the UN reiterated Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' appeal for a humanitarian ceasefire. According to Ambassador Fergal Mythen, Israel must abide by international law and Ireland is gravely concerned by the deaths of civilians in the Gaza Strip (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2023). Additionally, Ireland reaffirmed its stance on the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict on December 12 of that year by voting in favour of a ceasefire at the UNGA once more. A second resolution requesting a truce, the

unconditional release of all hostages, and unhindered humanitarian access was later passed by the Assembly. (UNRIC, 2023).

At regional level, Ireland pushes the EU to call for a ceasefire in the EU Foreign Affairs Council in Luxemburg on 16 October 2023. Tánaiste Micheál Martin in particular stressed the need for allowing goods, aid, and supplies to reach Gaza, which is a matter of utmost urgency (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2023b). Similar action was taken by then-Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, who at the EU Summit on December 12, 2023, pressed EU leaders to call for an Israel-Gaza truce. Mr. Varadkar claimed that because the EU has applied different standards to Israel-Palestine case than it has to Ukraine-Russia one, it has lost the trust of the Global South, which includes the majority of the world. In light of this, he called on Europe to take a more assertive stance and support an end to the conflict in Gaza between Israel and the Palestinian resistance group, Hamas. (Aljazeera, 2023c).

A vote for an immediate, permanent, and unconditional ceasefire was endorsed by all Irish Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) the following month, but the proposal was not approved by the Parliament. Ms. O'Sullivan, an Irish member of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Palestine, commented on the situation and voiced concern that the Parliament was essentially allowing the far-right Israeli government to continue bombarding Gaza by requiring the destruction of Hamas in order to grant a ceasefire. She believes that the EU has once again shown little initiative in responding to Israel's assault on the civilian population in Gaza (Ní Aodha, 2024a).

The call for a ceasefire was also given by the new Taoiseach, Simon Harris, as he stepped into office replacing Leo Varadkar in April 2024. In the interview after his nomination, the Prime Minister said that saying that he would continue to work towards a ceasefire in Gaza. *"In Gaza, we are witnessing humanitarian catastrophe. Men, women and children are being slaughtered and starved ... As a country, we will do our part to bring about a ceasefire and lasting peace"* (Murphy, 2024).

Another call for an urgent ceasefire was delivered by Taoiseach and Tánaiste on May 2024 after Israel conducted a military operation on Rafah, which killed children and innocent civilians. The dispute cannot be resolved militarily, according to Tánaiste Michael Martin, who further denounced any organization that seeks to destroy the states of Israel and Palestine by terrorism or bloodshed (BBC, 2024). While he once more called for moderation in the Middle East and an early cease-fire in Gaza in September, he restated the call for a long-lasting ceasefire and unhindered humanitarian delivery in mid-August (Bir, 2024a; Department of the Taoiseach, 2024b).

In the domestic fora, Dáil and Seanad Debates are often marked by calls and pressure for a ceasefire. Members of both houses stress how Ireland should take a leading role in the EU and for the organization to push towards a ceasefire. They also emphasize how Israel should be held responsible for war crimes and violations of international law, and how its excessive response is to blame for the humanitarian crisis currently engulfing Gaza (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2024a). Others highlight how, given Ireland's own history of colonialism and oppression, the country should play a bigger role in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian problem in order to achieve a just and lasting peace settlement in the area and, eventually, a sovereign and independent Palestine (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2023b). With regards to Irish Political Parties, namely Sinn Fein, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, Green Party, People Before Profit, Labour Party, Social Democrats, and Green Party, each of them urged for an immediate and lasting ceasefire (Ó. Ryan, 2024).

C. Funding and Humanitarian Aids

Due to the resurgent conflict, international agencies like UNRWA and OCHA play a critical role in providing the inhabitants with everyday basics like food and medicine. However, these organizations largely depend on funding in their operation – and thus, donor countries. Ireland, in this regard, is among the

committed donors to the organizations. Ireland's development cooperation program, Irish Aid, also plays a vital role in providing support in the oPt.

Since the 7 October conflict started, Ireland has been among the countries that consistently extended support towards international organizations operating in the oPt. Soon after the conflict resumed Ireland announced that it would disburse an additional 13 € million to the core funding, with an allocation of 10 € million for the UNRWA and 3 € million for the OCHA oPt. Previously in 2023, Ireland provided 8 € million for UNRWA among which 2 € million were allocated for Lebanon and Syria each. In the statement delivered by Tánaiste Micheál Martin, Ireland's total funding to Palestine in 2023 reached 29 € million, of which 18 € million was provided for the UNRWA (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2023a).

In January 2024, donor countries suspended funding after Israel claimed that UNRWA members were involved in the 7 October attack. By the end of the month, Austria, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Romania, Sweden, USA, Iceland, UK, Japan, Canada and Australia decided to suspend their budget allocation for the agency. The decision shocked many countries and non-profit organizations altogether. It will definitely worsen the already dire situation in Gaza (Amnesty International, 2024b).

On the other hand, UNRWA carried out an investigation which resulted in nine UNRWA members being dismissed. However, it is found that there is no enough evidence for Israel's accusation that a large number of employees of UNRWA were Hamas' members (The New Humanitarian, 2024). Among all UN agencies, it is also determined that UNRWA has the most extensive mechanisms and processes for guaranteeing humanitarian neutrality. Nevertheless, the decision made by several donor countries led to a major crisis in the agency, as the funding suspension amounted to approximately 450 $ million (United Nations, 2024d).

While other countries suspended their fund, Ireland chose to increase their funding by 20 € million for the UNRWA instead. In his statement, Tánaiste

Micheál Martin acknowledged UNRWA's role as the backbone in Gaza to provide basic life-saving provisions as the area continues to face military escalation by Israel, and that the agency urgently needs support from all UN member states. The Tánaiste also held call with UNRWA's Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini and reassured Ireland's unwavering support towards the agency and urged all EU and regional partners to provide whatever financial support available for the UNRWA (Irish Aid, 2024b). Ireland's move to pledge for additional 20 € million in funding is highly appreciated by the UNRWA Commissioner-General who stated that it is an exemplary role that should be followed by other countries (Lazzarini, 2024). In addition to the UNRWA and OCHA, Ireland also provides support for other partners operating in the oPt such as the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) – all of which contribute significantly to the provision of humanitarian care for Gazans (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2023c).

During the Dáil Debate held on March 2024, Rep. Sean Fleming stated that Ireland has provided 56 € million, in total, funding for Palestine since the beginning of 2023. Of that budget, 40 € million were allocated for humanitarian assistance since the outbreak of the conflict in October 2023, including the 20 € million it raised for the UNRWA after several donor countries froze their funding. Besides funding, the Irish government, via the Irish Rapid Response Initiative, provides assistance in the form of 50 tonnes of relief supplies, 500 family tents, and 3.000 tarpaulins which were distributed to support 1.500 families. The aid efforts were managed by Trócaire, the Catholic Church's official development agency in Ireland, and the Catholic Relief Service operating in the oPt. Additionally, Ireland supplied three pallets of medical blood at the request of Egyptian health authorities via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2024b).

D. Diplomatic Efforts with Regional Partners

Diplomatic initiatives are among the first steps taken by the Irish government as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict resumed. Following the 7 October attack, Tánaiste Micheál Martin sent a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Eli Cohen expressing Ireland's condolences to the Israeli people. This was succeeded by a call with Palestine's Foreign Minister Riyad Al Maliki and Fatah's central committee Jibril Rajoub during which the Tánaiste stressed the importance of communicating to the world that Hamas is not representing Palestinian people – which was understood and agreed by the Palestinian counterparts. The Tánaiste also preoccupied with active discussions with Jordan, UAE, and the Palestinian Authority about establishing a humanitarian corridor to be able to reach the people of Palestine. Another call was held with UNRWA commissioner general, Philippe Lazzarini, in which Tánaiste reaffirmed Ireland's support for the agency (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2023b).

One of the nations with whom Ireland has maintained constant contact since the start of the conflict is Egypt. On November 15, 2023, Tanáiste Micheál Martin travelled to the country to meet Egypt's then-foreign minister Sameh Shoukry and Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the secretary general of the Arab League. As a matter of fact, the Tánaiste also met 23 Irish citizens who managed to leave Gaza via the Rafah border. Given Egypt's prior experience negotiating ceasefires between Israel and Hamas, the Tanáiste specifically praised the Egyptian administration for its thorough understanding and proficiency in the Israeli-Palestinian issue (Beesley, 2023). Egypt, on the other hand, called for clearer responses from EU members regarding the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza as Israel's conduct is clearly a violation of International Humanitarian Law (Tabikha, 2023). Another meeting was held in April 2024 to further discuss how Ireland and other like-minded nations in Europe can contribute to resolving conflict. Ireland, in particular, emphasized its commitment to supporting regional efforts to re-establish a political pathway toward a lasting solution to the conflict. Among the matters discussed are the need to push for a ceasefire, release of hostages, and

unrestricted humanitarian access (Ní Aodha, 2024b). In July 2024 the Tánaiste held a series of calls with Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi discussing escalating tension in the Israeli-Lebanese border, Israel's expanding settlement, as well as required measures to restore political pathway and comprehensive political solutions based on the Arab Peace Vision (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2024b).

As part of a series of Irish trips to regional partners aimed at re-establishing peace in the Middle East, Ireland also paid a visit to Jordan in April 2024. During the visit to Jordan, Tánaiste Micheál Martin and Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi engaged in a vital discussion about the ongoing conflict, the need for a ceasefire as well as required measures need to be taken to avoid an escalation that could generate regional war. Ireland's plan to recognize Palestine is also being discussed (Fana News, 2024). In addition, the Irish Foreign Minister and Defense also visited the UNRWA's Talbieh Camp in the country during which Tánaiste was briefed about the agency's operation and Jordan and a discussion with members of the student parliament (UNRWA, 2024).

In May of the same year, another talk about Ireland's plan to recognize Palestine was held. Prime Minister Simon Harris called King Abdullah II to brief him about Ireland's upcoming decision that will materialize by the end of May. In return, Taoiseach was also briefed by King Abdullah about Jordan's effort to secure an end to the conflict which will be discussed in the Arab Summit (Hogan-Jones & Clarke, 2024). On July 2024, Foreign Affairs' Minister of both countries again discussed during a call the efforts for unhindered aid delivery and steps to be taken to stop Israeli military aggression that clearly breached international law. Ireland also considering joining Jordan's step in sending aid via air, but believes that sending aid via road is a priority as it would reach more distant areas. Tánaiste emphasized that aid deliveries via air should not be a reason for Israel to continue to blockade the route to Gaza (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2024b). Ireland in particular appreciated Jordan's endeavours to deliver humanitarian aid to the besieged strip, while Jordan welcomed Ireland's decision to recognize

Palestine and hoped other countries soon follow suit as it would secure the Palestinian people's legitimate rights to establish an independent country along with 1967 borders (The Jordan Times, 2024). Another visit was made in November 2024 by Ireland to discuss regional escalation in Gaza and the West Bank (Jordan Daily, 2024).

Tánaiste also held a call with Iran early after the outbreak of the conflict during which he urged Iran's counterparts to use its influence positively to defuse the conflict in the region (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2023b). In September 2024, Tánaiste reaffirmed the message, emphasizing the need for moderation "on all sides at this time". Ireland in particular acknowledges Iran's pivotal role in preventing the situation from getting worse and feels that spiral violence that could lead to a regional war would be pointless and make peace even more difficult to achieve (Bir, 2024a). A similar discussion was held with Lebanon during a call on 18 October 2023 in which Irish Foreign Minister and Defense stressed that escalation of the conflict would not benefit anyone and asked Lebanese Defence Minister Maurice Sleem to bring his influence to prevent conflict escalation (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2023b).

E. Calling for Review of the EU-Israel Association Agreement and Divestment from Israeli Firms

In a joint letter to Ursula Von Der Leyen in February 2024, Ireland and Spain urged the EU Commission to examine the EU-Israel Association Agreement and determine whether Israel complies with the agreement's human rights provisions. The two nations took this step in response to a report that Israel would launch a ground operation in Rafah and ICJ rulings which suggested Israel's actions would be covered by the Genocide Convention, which South Africa had submitted in January. The Spanish prime minister stated in a tweet on February 14 that the EU's commitment to human rights and dignity cannot be waived (Liborerio, 2024).

The main official framework for managing relations between the EU and Israel is the EU-Israel Association Agreement. Enforced since 2000, this agreement governs various aspects of the relationship including politics, trade, technology, economy, and society. Additionally, it regulates the free flow of commodities from Israel to the EU and the other way around (Israeli Mission to the European Union, n.d.). However, it is mentioned in Article II that "*Relations between the Parties, as well as all the provisions of the Agreement itself, shall be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles, which guides their internal and international policy and constitutes an essential element of this Agreement*" (Official Journal of the European Communities, 2000).

In 2022, the EU accounted for 28.8% of Israel's total goods trade, making it its biggest trading partner. Israel imported 31.9% of its total goods from the EU, and it exported 25.6% of its goods to EU nations. Additionally, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which gives Israel 1.8 € billion annually, is based on the Association Agreement. Additionally, Israel participates in the EU's research and innovation framework programs through Horizon Europe, which is awarding 95.5 € billion in grants between 2021 and 2027 (European Commission, 2024b). A sanction in the form of a temporary suspension of free trade between Israel and the EU could befall Israel if the review took place, which would undoubtedly be a major blow to the country.

After Ireland and Spain pressed for the review in January, in May 2024 EU's 27 member states unanimously agreed to hold an Association Council to hold Tel Aviv accountable for the ongoing conflict in Gaza. The meeting will also be used as an opportunity to put pressure on Netanyahu administration to abide by the ruling of ICJ on 24 May which mandates that it must halt military operations in Rafah (M. G. Jones, 2024). However, Israel has declined the EU's request for a specific summit to address human rights issues, proposing instead a usual one to assess overall trade relations in the second half of 2024, when Hungary will

hold the presidency (De La Feld, 2024). It is crucial to remember that Hungary is, in fact, one of Israel's cronies in the EU.

Ireland and Spain again renewed a call in October 2024 to urgently examine the compliance of Israel in practicing human rights as mentioned in the Association Agreement (Bir, 2024b). Regarding this, Taoiseach Simon Harris declares that Ireland will halt commerce with Israel on its own initiative without waiting for an EU resolution. Taoiseach stated that the recent unilateral sanctioning of Israel was done in light of the July 2024 ICJ Advisory Opinion, which found that Israel's persistent annexation and occupation of Israel on Palestinian territory tresspasses primary tenets of international humanitarian law (Tidey & Murray, 2024).

Previously in March 2023 the Illegal Israeli Settlement Divestment Bill was introduced by John Brady Teachta Dála from Sinn Féin. The bill authorizes the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) to prohibit Irish investment managed by the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) in Israeli companies listed by the UN operating in illegal settlement on Palestinian land (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2023a). By early April 2024, ISIF divest from six Israeli firms including Bank Hapoalim, Bank Leumi-le Israel, Israel Discount Bank, Mizrahi Tefahot Bank Ltd, First International Bank, and Rami Levi CN Stores (Reuters, 2024).

F. Recognition of Palestine as an Independent State

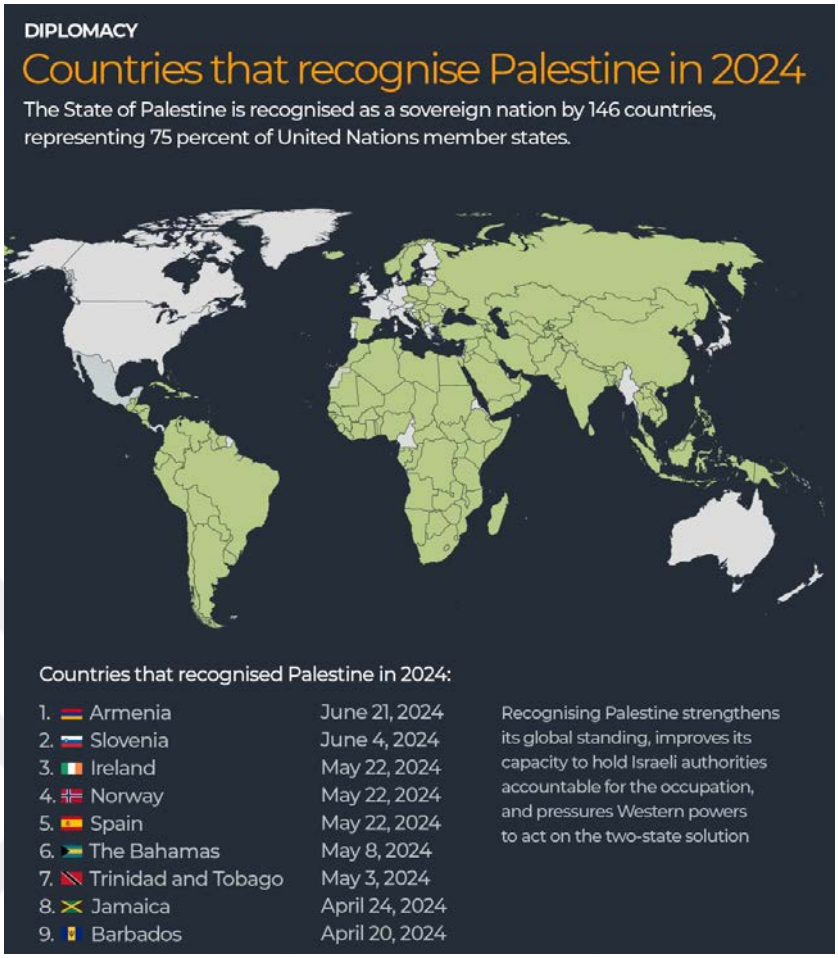
On 28 May 2024, Ireland formally acknowledges Palestine as an independent state. The decision was taken simultaneously with Spain and Norway, which aimed to add international pressure towards Israel with regard to its ongoing war in Gaza and to push other European nations to follow suit. Taoiseach Simon Harris stated that Ireland's recognition of Palestine was to keep hope alive and

to believe a two-state solution is the only way for Israel and Palestine to coexist peacefully (Department of the Taoiseach, 2024a).

Approaching Dublin's 2024 move to recognize Palestine, several key figures in Ireland share their comments. Tánaiste Micheál Martin stated that the recognition of Palestine is a historic moment for Ireland. Ireland, he said, firmly believes that Middle East's peace can only be achieved if both Palestinians and Israelis are granted equal rights to self-determination, statehood, peace, security, and dignity and thus, a two-state solution is the one practical answer for a better future. The peace process will continue when Palestinian statehood is recognized. Rather, it is just the start of it (Department of the Taoiseach, 2024a).

Minister Eamon Ryan, Ireland's Minister of Transport, also commented on Ireland's recognition of Palestine, stating that Palestine fully deserves international recognition as a state and that it is appropriate for Ireland to take this step. He expressed hope that other countries would follow Ireland's lead. The minister also clarified that this decision does not undermine Israel's right to exist. Instead, it should serve as an initial step toward achieving a peaceful future for both Israel and Palestine (Department of the Taoiseach, 2024a).

Taoiseach Simon Harris emphasized that merely condemning and expressing repulsion is insufficient. "We must be on the right side of history," he stated. The recognition of Palestine, he hopes, will push a two-state solution, and mostly will send a message of hope to the Palestinian people that Ireland stands with them even in this darkest hour (Wilson, 2024).



List of countries recognizing Palestine in 2024. **Source:** Aljazeera.

In addition to Norway, Spain, and Ireland, it is noteworthy that a number of additional nations recognized Palestine in 2024. These includes Barbados and Jamaica in April, Trinidad and Tobago and The Bahamas in May, as well as Slovenia and Armenia in June. In total, 146 countries have recognized Palestine as an independent state, representing 75% of the UN's membership (AJLabs, 2024).

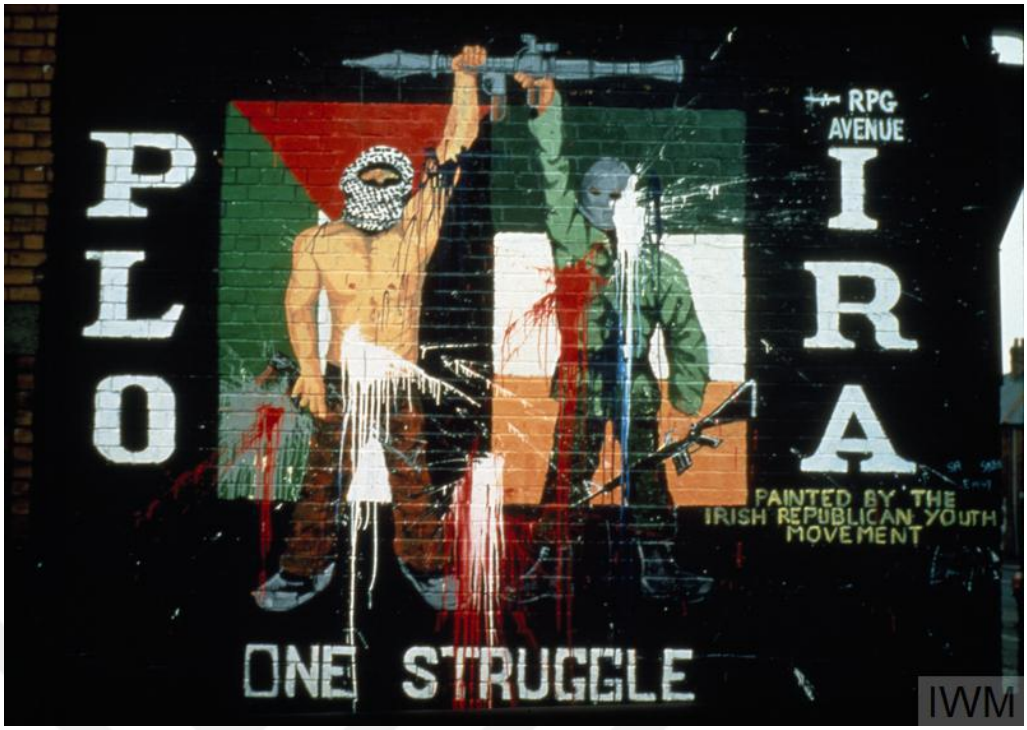
II. Ireland's Attitude towards the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict through the Lens of Constructivism

Constructivism argues that identities shape interests, and interests, in turn, shape action. Therefore, to understand the logic behind Ireland's actions or attitude towards the unfolding conflict in the Middle East, we first need to comprehend Ireland's identities. The following sections will discuss Irish history, domestic identities, international social structure, and the identity Ireland in the international society.

A. Ireland and Palestine: A Parallel of History

Despite being separated by a great geographical distance, Ireland and Palestine have a strong bond due to their shared history. The resemblance between the two was even affirmed by President Joe Biden while visiting Jerusalem in 2022, stating that there is a poem from "The Cure at Troy" which is classically Irish, but resonates with those of Palestinians. The last line of the poem says *'hope and history rhyme'*, which he hoped that one day, people will be reaching a point where hope aligns with historical progress (The White House, 2022).

Ireland and Palestine, indeed, share several comparable features. On the one hand, Ireland was then centuries-long under British colonialism. In fact, the country was the first, the last, and the longest colony of England. Colonial practice in Ireland became a model for the English to apply it in other colonies, making Ireland a "laboratory" for the British Empire. Peace in the region only truly came in 1998, after the Good Friday Agreement. On the other hand, Israel occupied Palestine for more than 50 years. Both communities showed – *and show* great resistance towards the occupiers. This particular similarity is also acknowledged by both communities even today. Murals of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and PLO, the name of Irish and Palestinian figures feature the streets in Republican areas in Northern Ireland (Kuttab, 2022).



A mural depicting solidarity between PLO and IRA in Northern Ireland.

Source: Imperial War Museum.

The resemblance between the two nations is also apparent in the colonial settlement and land appropriation from native people. Just as new settlers consisting of English and Scottish migrated to Ireland, particularly in the plantation era, Zionists migrated to Palestine after the British mandate started. Both populations experienced land grabbing and forced eviction from their homes. In addition, IRA and PLO, whose members were mostly working class, were largely disadvantaged groups facing a dominant class backed by powerful states (Kuttab, 2022).

In Ireland, a striking difference in land ownership was that in the 1600s Irish Catholics still owned 90% of the land, yet by the early 18th century Irish Catholics only had 20% less of the land left (Zhan, 2023). In comparison, only 6% of Palestinian land were owned by Jews prior to 1948. By 2020, Israel occupied 85% of historic Palestinian land (Khalidi, 2021; Middle East Monitor, 2020).

Another thing that coincidentally corresponds to both nations was that in 1887 Arthur Balfour was Ireland's Chief Secretary, nicknamed "Bloody Balfour" for his determination to restore English' law in the region. In 1917, he issued Balfour Declaration, recognizing the rights of Jews in Palestine, which would forever change the fate of the Palestinians (GOV.UK, 2024). Moreover, British' Black and Tans, known for their ferocity when serving in Ireland before gaining independence in 1921, were the same troops that were sent to Palestine during the British mandate period before 1948 (Cahill, 2009).

B. Ireland's Corporate Identity

1) Post-colonial Society

Irish identity as a post-colonial country is implicitly mentioned in the preamble of the Irish Constitution, stating that: "*… Gratefully remembering their heroic and unremitting struggle to regain the rightful independence of our Nation …*" (Irish Statute Book, 1937). Moreover, the Irish government and officials also time and again mentioned Irish history under British occupation during commemorations on national days, governmental debate sessions, as well as international speeches. The speech of Eamon de Valera, Former President of Ireland, at the League of Nations Assembly on 2 July 1936 well illustrated this matter. The Former President highlighted the skepticism among member countries regarding the situations faced by other nations. Drawing from Ireland's own history of aggression and dismemberment, he suggested that the Irish delegation might be particularly attuned to Ethiopia's struggles. De Valera warned against succumbing to despair but also cautioned against the foolishness of ignoring the reality of the situation as though nothing had occurred (Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, 1936).

It merits attention that Ireland's very suffering of colonization not only made Ireland sympathetic towards other nations experiencing oppression. In fact, Ireland asserted that, given its own history, it has a legitimate basis to empathize

with those around the world who endure daily struggles with disease, poverty, and hunger (Irish Aid, 2006a). Ireland chooses to bear the moral and ethical responsibility to recognize and demand for other nations to have their rights fulfilled just as Ireland demands for its own. Frederick Boland, an Irish diplomat who served as the President of the UNGA, wrote a letter to enclose de Valera's speech during the sixteenth Assembly of the League of Nations in September 1935, he stated:

> *"We claim the right to order our own life in our own way and select our own governmental institutions without interference, prepared to admit for all other nations in their respective territories the same rights which we claim for ourselves in ours."* (Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, 1935).

The best illustration of how Ireland wants justice for other countries is the three-year strike by ten employees of the Dunnes Store in opposition to the South African apartheid government. Due to a directive from her union, the Irish Distributive and Administrative Trade Union (IDATU), Mary Manning, the cashier at Dunnes, declined to accept a customer's purchase of South African fruit. After being suspended, she went on strike on Henry Street, Dublin, which was then joined by her nine other friends and stood amidst all conditions for millions of oppressed people they had never met. The strike lasted from 1984 to 1987, the longest in Irish trade union history and forced the Irish government to ban South African goods – and was the first Western Nation to do so. Not only their effort was acknowledged by Archbishop Desmond Tutu who visited them on his way to receive his Nobel Peace Prize, but Nelson Mandela also met with the strikers after his release from jail, and said that their stand helped keep him going during his imprisonment. The name of the workers was put on a plaque on Henry Street and 'Mary' is used to name a street in Johannesburg as a tribute to their effort in bringing down apartheid (The Independent, 2013).

In the case of Israel and Palestine, Ireland's stance is supporting the two-state solutions and the creation of Palestine coexisting with Israel within the 1967

boundaries. However, considering Irish endorsement towards numerous United Nations resolutions, the voting in various regional and international forums, and raising the issue of Palestinian rights, it is obvious that Ireland's position is more inclined towards Palestine.

Parallel between Irish history and today's Palestine also frequently drawn by Irish deputies and senators during legislative debates and meetings. During the Dáil Debate on 18 October 2023, for example, Deputy Matt Carthy stated "*… We know colonialism, oppression and conflict … Due to what we know and what our history has taught us, our call must be clear: immediate, full, and unequivocal ceasefires …*". Furthermore, Deputy Brendan Howlin said that "*… But we in this nation, with our history, must not despair in the face of such awfulness. We must seek still to advocate for peace*". Giving the same notion, Deputy Mary Lou McDonald stated "*Our history now speaks powerfully to us … to speak out, to act in defense of Palestine and to act for freedom and self-determination … Ireland can and must be a leading voice for dialogue, a just settlement, ceasefires and peace*" (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2023b). Similarities between Irish history and what is currently undergoing in Palestine are also confirmed by Daud Kuttab through his writing in the Arab Center Washington DC, stating that colonial settlement and religious factors are apparent in both cases. He also draws a parallel between working-class IRA and PLO, which were, and are, disadvantaged groups fighting against powerful elites (Kuttab, 2022).

It is important to note, though, that Ireland started off as a supporter of Israel. Ireland initially saw the Jewish experience like their own – as a society enduring oppression, exiled from its land for centuries, and fighting against a powerful empire. There was even mutual admiration between the Irgun and IRA. However, things started to flip as Israel annexed more and more Arab lands while Ireland developed a view of anti-colonialism. The view Ireland holds to date has further alienated the relationship between the two countries (O'Loughlin, 2023).

On 2-3 November 2023, on account of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Campaign for Palestine (IAAC-P), a poll was conducted by Irish Thinks regarding Israeli-Palestinian cause and the capacity can be performed by both Ireland and the EU in resolving the conflict. The participants numbered 1.387 people, an exact replica of Ireland's most recent census. When asked about the situations faced by Palestinian people, 71% of Irish public agree that Palestinians live under apartheid regime imposed by Israel. When the result was further analyzed by political affiliations, the majority of the coalition in the government agreed with the statement, with 71% of Fianna Fáil, 56% of Fine Gael, and 85% of the Green Party. Among the opposition, 100% of Solidarity PBP, 90% of Labour, 86% of Social Democrats, 80% of Sinn Féin, and 41% of Aontú supporters agreed with the statement (Amnesty International, 2024a).

The identity as a post-colonial society makes Ireland, which is basically a Western country with a white people majority, affiliating itself more with the oppressed and those of the Global South. This very identity is depicted in their support for South Africa and Palestine.

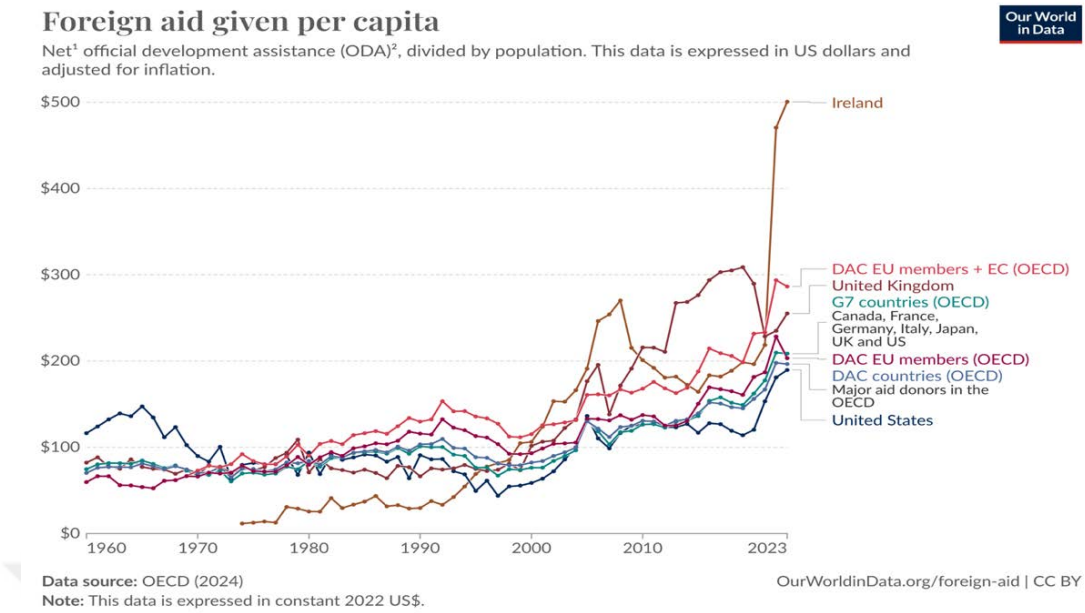
2) A country of Morality and Justice: Building Global Solidarity, Upholding Human Rights, Adhering International Laws

Morality is of the core and fundamental identity of Ireland, and is written the Irish constitution's preamble "*… And seeking to promote the common good with due observance of Prudence, Justice, and Charity, so that … concord established with other nations …*". The emphasis on morality in conducting international relations is particularly stated in Article 29 (1), saying that "*Ireland affirms its devotion to the ideal of peace and friendly co-operation amongst nations founded on international justice and morality*" (Irish Statute Book, 1937). In this respect, Ireland holds the view that justice and morality are the foundation, upon which relations with other nations is built.

Irish Aid, Ireland's official development program overseas, is a manifestation of morality upheld by Ireland to help countries in need. Although the program was commenced in 1974, it was in 2006 that the Irish government issued A White Paper on Irish Aid which mainly directed towards Irish citizens. In the summary of the White Paper, the first sentence directed towards the public was: "Why Should Give Aid?" the answer is summed up in three simple words: "We should", "We need to", and "We can". The government stated that there is a compelling moral obligation to act as there is still people who die from hunger and easy-preventable disease across the world. Irish people had known famine, and had been receiving assistance which contributed to their development. Furthermore, the White Paper explains, Ireland is now having the capacity to render support (Irish Aid, 2006a).

In 2023, Irish Aid funded more than 2.6 € billion for the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) – the highest amount ever, and representing 0.67% of Irish Gross National Income GNI (Irish Aid, 2024c). In fact, Ireland has the highest foreign aid for two years in a row, amounting up to $ 470 in 2022 and $ 500 in 2023. This number is far higher compared to the United Kingdom, United States, DAC EU Members[5], DAC EU Members + EC[6], DAC Countries[7], and G7 Countries[8] .(Our World in Data, 2024) It is working with partners in more than 130 countries with main focus on 'furthest behind first', reducing humanitarian need, health, education, social protection, strengthening governance, peace and stability, and climate change (Irish Aid, 2024c).

[5] Refers to the countries that are both member of the EU and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s Development Assistance Committee (DAC).
[6] Refers to the DAC EU members, plus European Commission (EC).
[7] Refers to all countries that are members of OECD DAC countries, including non-EU members, such as Canada, Japan and the US.
[8] Group of the world's most developed economies consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.



Ireland's aid per capita. **Source:** Foreign aid given per capita – Our World in Data.

The number shows that Ireland allocated a relatively large amount of money per person towards its foreign aid. Starting with a number of just above $ 10 in 1974, the country made an enormously significant changes throughout the years. While Ireland is a smaller country and smaller number of populations compared to the US, the UK, or OECD countries like Germany, the figure suggests that Ireland is indeed a generous country with priorities of 'helping' others and a strong commitment towards development beyond Irish borders.

Irish Aid in Palestine has been providing funds to UNRWA since 2005, and focused on education, good governance and human rights, reducing humanitarian need, and gender equality. Among the programs implemented are funding for organizations working in human rights' field and accountability in both Israel and Palestine, strengthening the quality of education in Palestine and providing scholarships for Palestinians through the Ireland-Palestine Scholarship Program, funding the development of solar energy plant, and provide basic service to Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria (Irish Aid, 2024a).

After the Israeli-Palestinian conflict resumed, the country added 13 € million to the core budget to supply UNRWA and OCHA, this was to add another 20 € million to UNRWA as other donor countries ceased funding the agency due to Israel's allegation. The actions taken demonstrate Ireland's morality in viewing that despite the accusation of some of the agency's involvement in the 7 October attack, UNRWA is among the main, if not sole, basic needs providers for two million people of Gaza. Since the war started, the people of Gaza lost access to basic needs including electricity, clean water, and health facilities and face starvation.

Irish Aid in programs Palestine, along with the undertaken measures since 7 October resonate with the statement written at the very beginning of the White Paper, as a rationale espoused by the Irish government, that:

> *"The case for aid is not simply a practical one, it is a moral one … we give aid because it is right that we help those in greatest need ... For some, political and strategic motives may influence decisions on the allocation of development assistance. That is not the case for Ireland. For Ireland, the provision of assistance and our cooperation with developing countries is a reflection of our responsibility to others and of our vision of a fair global society."* (Irish Aid, 2006b).

In the broader context, upholding morality and justice may as well be understood as support and adherence to international law and human rights. In this respect, Ireland has always upheld human rights values and adhered to international law. In fact, references towards the human right and international law are often time cited by members of Dáil and Seanad during legislative debate while addressing both domestic and foreign matters. This was usually followed by another sentence: that Ireland can do better. Indeed, it is stated in Article 29 (3) that: *"Ireland accepts the generally recognized principles of international law as its rule of conduct in its relations with other States."* (Irish Statute Book, 1937).

The older case was in the 1970s, a period when a major shift took place in European foreign policy which was ultimately accepted by all member states

regarding the Palestinian issue. Previously, member countries only regarded it as a refugee problem before considering it as a more essential one. However, Ireland, since the very beginning of that period, had already seen the Palestinian issue, whose people have undergone displacement, land-grabbing, and injustice, as one of the fundamental issues: that the people of Palestine need a homeland and a state of their own (Doyle, 2008).

In the 7 October case, Ireland's support towards various UN resolutions urging for ceasefires and particularly demanding for the review of the Association Agreement on Israel's implementation of human rights obligations show Ireland's position as a country and a member of the EU to push the organization to fulfill its duty in upholding human rights standard. In addition, intervention and support of South Africa's case against Israel in the ICJ prove that Ireland upholds human rights values and adheres to international law, as mentioned in its constitution. It should also be noted that Ireland condemns Hamas' actions as well.

On 18 April 2024, Ireland co-sponsored the General Assembly Resolution - ES 10/23 which called for the State of Palestine to be admitted to the UN. Even though it was vetoed by the US, Tánaiste Micheál Martin expressed pride in Ireland's leadership role in co-sponsoring and supporting the resolution and voted in favour. He continued by saying that in order to protect the equal rights of Israelis and Palestinians to security, dignity, and self-determination, the international community must act in a clear and decisive manner (Murray, 2024).

During the Seanad Debate statement on Europe Day on May 9, 2024, Deputy Jennifer MacNeill expressed pride in Ireland's moral and ethical stance as a post-colonial society. She highlighted that Ireland has never committed acts of cruelty against other parts of the world and lacks fancy buildings funded by the profits of such activities. MacNeill emphasized that this history gives Ireland a unique moral and diplomatic standing, as well as a humanitarian perspective that it applies to its actions. She noted that Ireland's post-colonial experience

particularly shapes its perspective on the Middle East conflict (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2024d).

With regards to the domestic human rights situations, the "2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices" issued by the US Department of State indicated that the human rights situation in Ireland is relatively stable with no credible reports on significant human rights abuse and that the government took a credible step to deal with officials who may have committed human right abuse (US Department of State, 2023). Ireland is also a destination country for migrants, and the number of incoming migrants has increased. The government, while tightening its measures towards undocumented migrants in the country, stated that Irish people were once migrants and that now, in search of a better life, people are coming to Ireland. This gives a more humanitarian view for migrants, as Taoiseach Simon Harris said, "*We know because we were them, and this is also our story*" (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2024e).

It can be seen that morality and justice are the core identities of Ireland that often time features its approach towards international issues. Ireland's history apparently is among the factors that contributed to this identity. While Ireland's given attention towards human rights and international law is considered respectable in the international arena, it is fairly safe to say so for Ireland's human rights practices in the domestic fora.

3) Supporter of Multilateralism

While strictly understood as a form of cooperation of at least three states, the term 'Multilateralism' is not only based on its quantitative aspect. Instead, it involves adherence to a collective political project that is based on shared norms and values with principles of solidarity, inclusion and consultation as the focus. Being said so, Multilateralism can be understood as both *method* and *form* of cooperation in international relations (United Nations, 2024a). This is in line with

Ireland's constitution Article 29 (2), stating that *"Ireland affirms its adherence to the principle of the pacific settlement of international disputes by international arbitration or judicial determination"*, and Article 29 (3) *"Ireland accepts the generally recognized principles of international law as its rule of conduct in its relations with other States"* (Irish Statute Book, 1937)

Ireland's multilateralism identity is also rooted in its history under British colonial rule. After gaining independence in 1921 and changing its constitution to be a republic in 1937, Ireland chose to be neutral during World War II. This policy of neutrality was announced by Taoiseach Eamon de Valera in February 1939 and reaffirmed through a radio broadcast as soon as the war broke out in Europe in September (RTÉ Archives, 1939). In this respect, neutrality became the starting point for the country's multilateralism identity. The position was taken by Ireland as the country did not want to be complicit in colonial wars. In fact, Ireland preferred to maintain peace and security, which was latter apparent following its involvement in the UN. As the late Taoiseach said, *"With our history, with our experience of the last war and with a part of our country still unjustly severed from us, we felt that no other decision and no other policy was possible"* (RTÉ Archives, 1939). From the political view of a small country, joining the war means again being 'under' world powers, a position under which Ireland endured for centuries. Since then, Ireland's military neutrality policy of non-involvement in any regional defense alliance, military agreement, or war has been held until this day (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2024c).

"Eire" (Ireland) large sign on County Donegal (right next to Northern Ireland) indicates air fighters that they were flying in a neutral zone. **Source:** Inishowen Maritime Museum & Planetarium.

After the war, soon after its entrance to the UN Ireland declared its unequivocal support UN Charter, which is primarily predicated on upholding global security and peace, adhering to international law and respecting human rights and self-determination (Irish Royal Academy, 2015). It can be seen that Ireland's accession to the United Nations reinforces its core values in conducting international relations: pacific settlement by arbitration, respecting international law, and upholding justice and peace – all of which are part of the method of multilateralism. Ireland also chooses to maintain independent foreign policy and military neutrality. Ireland's military is instead deployed for the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), which later known as UN peacekeeping forces. Ireland first deployed its troops in 1958, and Irish troops always participated in the UN peace mission every single day for the past sixty-six years (Irish Royal Academy, 2015).

In January 1973, Ireland joined the European Community (EC), with a referendum agreed upon by the vast majority, 83%, of Irish people. Ireland's entry into the European Union brought significant changes, especially in the economic aspect. Ireland received funding from the Common Agricultural Policy

for farmers and community projects and had access to the European market with 40% of its exports flowing to EU member countries. This also reduced its reliance on UK market. It merits attention that although Ireland's membership in the EU and the organization's development requires Ireland to align its values with the organization, such as adopting an open economy and currency unification, Ireland still adheres to military neutrality by not joining or being involved in any military organizations or agreements including North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (European Commission, 2024a).

In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Ireland's approach to the matter has always been based on multilateralism. Ireland works with like-minded EU member countries, and other Middle Eastern allies including Jordan and Egypt, specifically on how it might help regional efforts to return to the political road to resolve the conflict. In this very matter, Ireland also made calls with Iran to use its influence positively and avoid escalation of the conflict. Ireland's preferred approach to the issue is clearly based on the principles of multilateralism which are consultation, inclusion, and using collectively developed rules to ensure sustainable peace.

In essence, Ireland has multilateral values that were born from its history under British colonialism. The military neutrality adopted by Ireland also informs that the country has a non-aggressive nature and can contribute to the peace process, through arbitration and the political table - as multilateralism suggests, without being seen as leaning towards a particular party. Joining an international organization does not change Ireland's multilateral values, but instead strengthens them. In fact, Ireland uses international organizations as a platform to echo the values of multilateralism that it adheres to, as in Ireland's term on the Security Council, during which it advocates and promotes global peace and justice. (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2024a).

C. International social structure: the presence of colonialism, states' polarization, and global justice norms

As discussed in the previous chapter, *Nakba* 1948 was a tragedy where hundred thousand of Palestinian people were expelled from their homes and became refugees both in surrounding Arab regions and in their own country in refugee camps. Although Resolution 194, mandating rights of return for Palestinian refugees, was issued by General Assembly, Palestinians expulsion from their homes continues to date. Israel instead began building settlements in the Palestinian territories which is part of both religious and political movements to secure Jewish domination in the area, hampering the creation of a Palestinian state. By 2024, over 20.000 Jews live in illegal West Bank outpost settlements (Israel Policy Forum, 2024). The First and Second Intifadas, as well as major armed clashes between Hamas and Israel in 2008, 2012, 2014, 2018 and 2021, demonstrated Palestinians' resilience against apartheid Israel. Indeed, Hamas' attack on October 7 was carried out for the same reason.

Hamas' attack on 7 October 2023 is an 'answer' to Israel's continued occupation: siege and bombing of Gaza, settlement expansions in the West Bank, attack by settlers on Palestinians, cruelty against the people of Palestine, and blasphemy towards Al-Aqsa Mosque (Aljazeera, 2023a). It is also crucial to remember that many Israeli companies operating in the oPt generate income for the country at the expense of the well-being and security of Palestinian people. The 7 October attack is in fact a response towards the presence of Israel's colonialism in the 21st century. Israel, on the other hand, has retaliated for over a year-long period by conducting ground invasion, firing missiles, dropping bombs, and causing massive displacement for Palestinians – some even relocated five times since the beginning of the conflict (Humaid, 2024). Furthermore, public hospitals, schools, mosques, and refugees' camps are all brought to the ground, and the number of people killed has reached over 40.000.

The world state reactions are polarized over the conflict, particularly in the first few months after it is started. The majority of the Global South and only a handful of European countries siding with Palestine, while Western powers are mostly supportive of Israel and declare that the country is entitled to self-defence. The differences between the two sides are evident in a number of UN votes, Von Der Leyen's affirmation that Europe commits to Israel and that Israel is justified to defend itself and its people, major donor countries' suspension of funding for UNRWA, and the US' unwavering support for Israel. Despite ICJ decisions that Israel must stop its actions in Gaza, theUS notably opposed and vetoed ceasefire resolutions for Gaza during the General Assembly and Security Council meetings on November 12 and 20, 2024, respectively (UN News, 2024).

In the case known as "*South Africa vs. Israel*", which was initially submitted to the ICJ in late December 2023, South Africa accused Israel of violating the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip. The ICJ, which is tasked with resolving disputes between states, investigates South Africa's claim. The Court declared in a preliminary verdict on January 26, 2024, that the claim is credible and specifically that Israel has broken and is still violating its obligations under the Genocide Convention. Additionally, it declares that Israel shall stop all of its activities that violate that commitment (International Court of Justice, 2024a).

On May 24, 2024, the Court issued another ruling emphasizing that Israel has to cease its Rafah military campaign right away, as it could lead to the partial or complete physical destruction of the city. The ruling came after South Africa urgently requested provisional measures as Israel fulfilled its promise to carry out a military operation in Rafah, which already hosts 1.5 Palestinian refugees, and has caused further displacement and civilian casualties. ICJ ruling on May 2024 also ordered Israel to maintain open the Rafah crossing for unhindered humanitarian assistance, and give access to fact-finding missions (International Court of Justice, 2024b). Prosecutors at the International Court of Justice (ICC)

had earlier on May 20 requested arrest warrants for Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's former defence minister Yoav Gallant, and three Hamas officials in connection with the war in Gaza (Regional Information Centre for Western Europe, 2024).

In response to questions from the General Assembly on the legal ramifications of Israel's policies and activities in the oPt, including East Jerusalem, the ICJ published an advisory opinion on July 19, 2024. The Court deemed Israel's continued presence in Palestinian territories outlawed after concluding that Israel's protracted occupation, settlement operations, citizen transfers, and discriminatory policies breach international law. Israel must stop all of those unlawful acts, which include, among other things, stopping settlement expansion, repealing anti-discrimination legislation, and paying full compensation for the harm its wrongdoing has caused (International Court of Justice, 2024c). However, Israel rejects ICJ's finding, which Netanyahu called "absurd", stating that Jews are not occupying power in their own historical land (S10, 2024).

Human Rights Watch released a report as well that exposed Israel's willful denial of Palestinians access to water for drinking and sanitation, which is a core human right. In fact, Israel cut off and restricted water supply to Gaza, intentionally destroyed water and sanitation infrastructure, and stopped the flow of essential water supply. These actions – called Israel's crime of extermination, added to Israeli authorities' statement wishing to destroy Palestine, may amount to the crime of genocide (Human Rights Watch, 2024).

D. Ireland within the International Society: A Middle-Power Country Committed to Human Rights

In the international social structure of continued presence of colonialism, world polarization and the existence of global justice norms – within which Ireland exists, Ireland's taken measures such as condemnations, multiple calls for cessation of hostilities, advancing funding for the UNRWA while other major

powers retreat, urging for review of Association Agreement, Divestment from Israeli firms, joining "*South Africa's vs. Israel*" case in the Court, and recognizing the State of Palestine as a sovereign country shows its identity to the world: as a middle power country committed to human rights.

The international social structure, in fact, helps Ireland in shaping this identity as an agent within the structure. While the presence of Israel's colonialism is against its belief and values emerging from its identity as a post-colonial society that every nation is entitled to self-determination, the existence of global justice norms apparent from various ICJ rulings in January, May, and especially July 2024 aligns with its identity as an upholder of moral and justice. This particularly helps Ireland in defining its position within the polarized world.

The last matter has been a huge consideration for Ireland as it is also a supporter of multilateralism, and in this regard, it is not just the method, but also the form. In the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), it is decided that two-state solution is the overarching principle for the conflict resolution in Israel-Palestine but leaves the decision of recognizing Palestinian statehood to individual member states. However, it is deemed ineffective due to the division between EU member states. Ireland's preference to avoid unilateral decisions hinders the country from recognizing Palestine sooner, although the parliament has issued a non-binding resolution to recognize the State of Palestine in 2014. In this respect, Ireland preferred to take the decision along with other EU members as it would have greater political impact and pressure (McDermott, 2023). This fits the argumentation that Ireland's decision to withhold the recognition is of political consideration. However, the further deteriorating condition in Gaza, growing international pressure towards Israel due to various UN resolutions and the ICJ and ICC role, and consensus among some like-minded EU members, finally prompted Ireland to recognize Palestine by late May 2024 along with Spain and Norway.

Israel declared the closure of its embassy in Dublin on December 15, 2024, citing what it called as Ireland's "extreme anti-Israel policies." In particular, Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar accused Ireland of antisemitism based on the demonization and delegitimization of the Jewish state, saying that its words and actions had crossed all red lines (Hemani, 2024). While regretting Israel's decision since it will close the diplomatic channels of communication, Prime Minister Simon Harris, called Israel's action as diplomacy of distraction regarding the country's actions in Gaza. He further stated that nobody is going to silence Ireland. The Prime Minister reiterated his condemnation of Hamas' attack on 7 October and the release of all hostages, but he also highlighted all the sufferings, killings, and worsening situation in Gaza with humanitarian aid not reaching the people in the region (O'Carroll, 2024).

Taoiseach Simon Harris also stated that he strongly rejects the idea that Ireland is anti-Israel. "*Ireland is pro-peace, pro-human rights and pro-international law, and wants two-state solution for Israel and Palestine to live in peace and security*", he wrote on his X account (Simon Harris, 2024).

Ireland's attitude towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after 7 October, thus, reflects both its domestic or corporate identity of post-colonial society, upholder of justice and morality, and supporter of multilateralism, and its social identity as a middle-power country committed to human rights. In this respect, Ireland's identity defines the country's interest, which is not a material one, but a moral one, that is to maintain peace and justice by upholding international law.

CONCLUSION

The resumed conflict started on 7 October 2023 marks a new chapter in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While Hamas' assault sparked international condemnation, Israel's counterattack caused an unprecedented scale of destruction and casualties. The brutality of the Israeli military offensive brought the people of Gaza to the brink of collapse, exacerbating the already dire situation in the Strip. The renewed conflict generates polarization among the international community with Third World countries supporting Palestine on the one hand and Western countries, including major powers supporting Israel on the other. Amid this divide, Ireland, a Western European country and close ally of the United States continues to voice its support for Palestine. Ireland's attitudes towards the conflict make it an "outlier" in the European Union.

Ireland's attitudes towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cover several important measures, that demonstrate the country's commitment to human rights, peace and justice. These actions include a balanced condemnation towards both Hamas and Israel, multiple calls for cessation of hostilities and unimpeded support for humanitarian agencies working in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), particularly when UNRWA donor countries ceased funding. Furthermore, Ireland continuously engaged in diplomatic efforts and consultations with regional partners and called the European Commission for a review of the EU-Israel Agreement to emphasize the importance of accountability and adherence to international standards. The country's divestment from six Israeli firms also showed its commitment and integrity towards human rights. Furthermore, Ireland supported South Africa's case in the ICJ and recognized Palestine as a sovereign state. These actions reflected Ireland's belief in a fair resolution to the conflict.

The reasons underlying Ireland's stance in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be traced to Ireland's history under British colonization which apparently shapes

the country's corporate identities. All of these identities are reflected in the values of the Irish constitution: a post-colonial society, upholder of justice and morality and supporter of multilateralism.

Ireland's identity as a post-colonial society often time makes the country sides with the oppressed and supports the self-determination movement, including deep solidarity with the Palestinians who live under Israeli occupation. The country's commitment to the value of justice and morality can be seen in Ireland's dedication to contributing to global development and adherence to international law. Lastly, Ireland's support towards multilateralism is reflected in the country's attitude toward maintaining international peace, the choice to avoid unilateral actions, conformity with the principle of international laws and respect for human rights.

In the current international situation within which colonialism exists, that is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the division of states in their responses to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the increasing relevance global justice norms, Ireland's corporate identities serve as motivational factors to engage with other states in international arena. Ireland, in this respect, is regarded as a middle-power country committed to human rights. The country's actions in the international arena align with its domestic identities. In actuality, Ireland's stance on the side of the oppressed – *the Palestinians*, is defined by the current international social order. It is crucial to remember that Ireland has a history of standing up for the oppressed, not just in the case of Palestine. Dunnes Stores employees went on strike for three years in a row to oppose the apartheid regime in South Africa until finally the Irish government became the first Western nation to ban South African goods.

That being said, Ireland's attitudes following the event of 7 October 2024 are testaments of Ireland's identity within the international social structure, as a middle-power country committed to human rights, which well mirrors its domestic identities and interests in maintaining peace and justice.

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