

Human Rights Council – 28th Special Session

18 May 2018

Statement by Ireland

Ireland aligns with the EU statement and adds the following

Mr President,

My Government and the people of Ireland have been profoundly shocked by recent events in Gaza and the scale of the casualties inflicted by Israeli forces on Palestinian demonstrators.

Our thoughts are primarily with the families of those killed, with the many who have suffered severe injuries, and with those who have worked in the most difficult and challenging circumstances to save lives.

Ireland recognises that Israel, like every country, has the right to defend its territory.

International law, however, clearly defines the circumstances in which force, and in particular deadly force, can be used against civilians.

Such force must only be used in cases of real and immediate threat to life, and only as a last resort – that is, when other methods have failed. The use of force should also be proportionate to the threat posed.

It is possible that a small number of those shot may have been trying to cross the border fence, but clearly many – most – were some distance inside Gaza and posing no immediate threat.

Violence on the part of some protestors is regrettable – and the organisers, those who control Gaza have a clear responsibility to prevent such actions.

But the evidence is that the great majority of protestors have been peaceful, and that events in no way justified the massive use of deadly force employed by the Israeli army.

It is welcome that the reports indicate that the situation has calmed in recent days, nonetheless my Government remains concerned that the situation could easily escalate again, and we call on all sides to show restraint, particularly, the Israeli authorities in their use of force.

Mr President,

Ireland welcomes the opportunity to discuss these critically important issues here in the Human Rights Council.

Ireland supports the resolution before the HRC, because we believe the establishment of an independent investigation, as called for by the UN Secretary General and others, is an essential response to these events. This does not constitute endorsement of every assertion in the resolution, on some of which Ireland has not taken a position.

Thank you.