

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For Immediate Release**

**Catholic Priests Urge Ireland to Use  
EU Presidency to Push for Gaza  
Ceasefire and Accountability, Citing  
Its Anti-Apartheid Legacy**



*Network of over 2,400 priests worldwide points to Ireland's historic 1980s boycott of apartheid South Africa as a model for principled leadership at the helm of the EU*

**Dublin, Ireland, 20 July 2026** — Priests Against Genocide, a global network of more than 2,400 Catholic priests across 62 countries — including two cardinals and 26 bishops — has sent an open letter to An Taoiseach, An Tánaiste, government ministers and members of the Oireachtas, urging Ireland to use its new Presidency of the European Union to press for an end to the conflict in Gaza and for accountability under international law.

The letter, signed by Priests Against Genocide's members in Ireland, expresses deep concern among priests and parishioners across the country over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, including the loss of civilian life, mass displacement, and the destruction of homes and infrastructure.

The priests cite a *July 2026 statement by Amnesty International*, which raised concerns about the European Union's response to alleged violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and called on individual member states to consider unilateral action where collective EU action has stalled.

In the letter, the group calls on the Irish Government to:

- Advocate strongly for an immediate and lasting ceasefire and the protection of all civilians;
- Support full and unhindered humanitarian access for those in need;
- Promote accountability through the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice;
- Examine all available diplomatic, economic and legislative measures to advance compliance with international law; and
- Work with European and international partners to keep human rights central to all EU agreements and relationships.

Notably, the letter draws a direct parallel to Ireland's own history of moral leadership on the world stage. In the 1980s, Ireland became the first European country to ban the importation of goods from apartheid South Africa — a stand that was controversial at the time but has since been vindicated by history. With Ireland now holding the Presidency of the European Union, the priests argue the country has been given a renewed opportunity to lead in that same spirit, using its influence at the heart of European decision-making to keep human rights and international law central to the EU's response to the crisis.

*“Our concern is rooted not in political ideology or any vestige of antisemitism, but in a conviction that every human life possesses inherent dignity,”* said a spokesperson for Priests Against Genocide Ireland. *“Ireland has shown before that it is willing to lead when the international community has struggled to act together. This is another such moment.”*

The letter closes by urging the Irish Government to continue using its voice and influence, both nationally and internationally, in support of human dignity and equality, humanitarian protection, and a just and lasting peace for all peoples of the region.

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