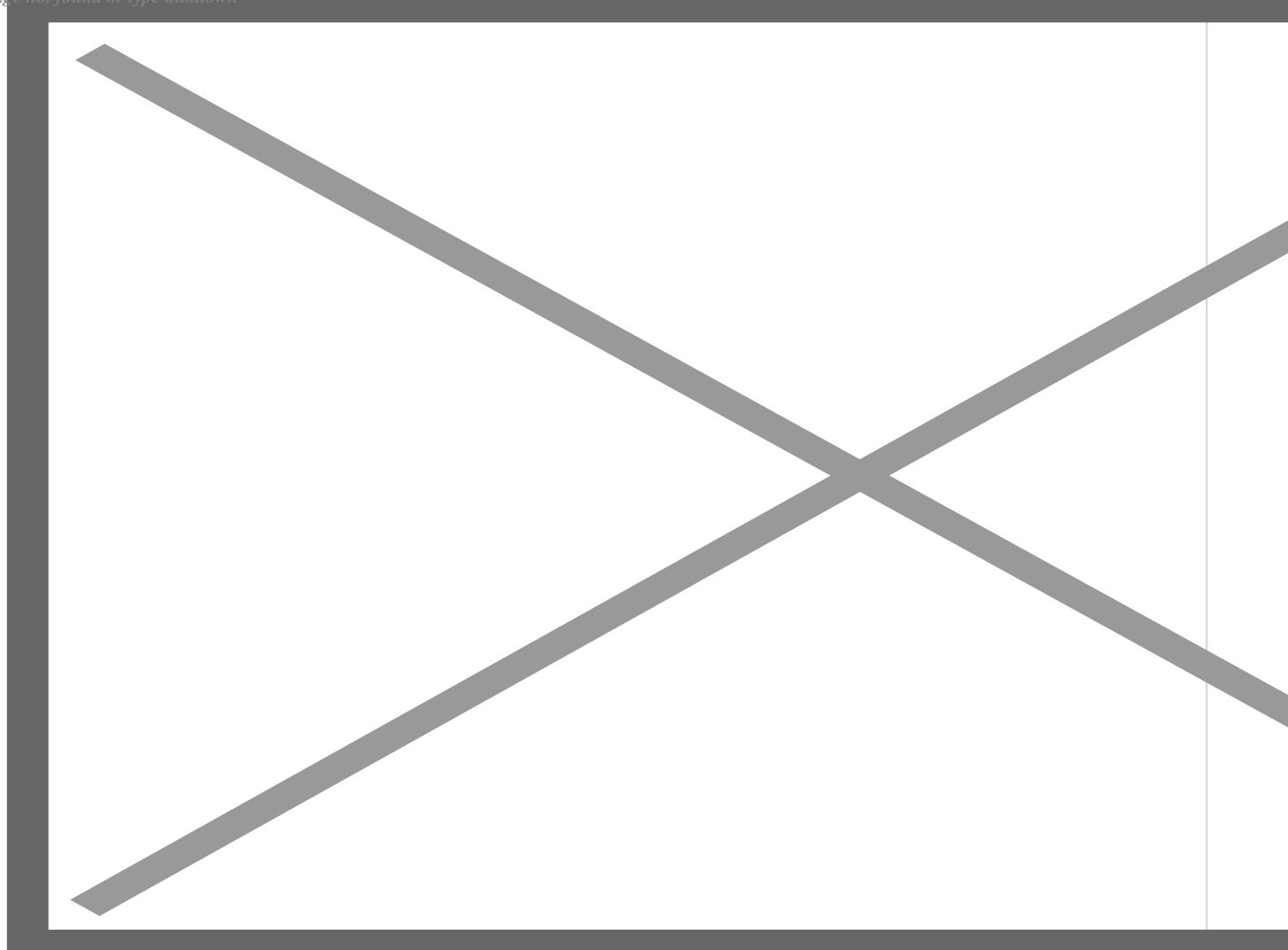


# *Irish foreign minister says Israel must bear full accountability for genocidal war on Gaza*

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**A woman gestures following Israeli strikes on the Ahmad Abdulaziz UNRWA-run school currently housing displaced families in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on December 16,**

2024. (Photo by AFP)

Brussels, December 17 (RHC)-- Irish Foreign Minister Micheal Martin says demanding accountability for the ongoing Israeli campaign of genocide in Gaza and respect for international law cannot be seen as "hostile acts towards Israel."

Speaking to reporters ahead of the EU foreign ministers meeting in Brussels on Monday, Martin defended his country's stance on the developments in the West Asia region following Israel's decision to close its embassy in Ireland for what the regime claimed was "extreme anti-Israel policy."

"Ireland stands by the approach it has taken, which has been motivated, as I have said, towards full accountability for what is happening in Gaza and for respect for international humanitarian law and human rights."

Israeli foreign minister Gideon Sa'ar said in a statement on Sunday that "the extreme anti-Israel policies of the Irish government" were the reason behind the decision. "Ireland has crossed every red line in its relations with Israel," he added.

The top Irish diplomat emphasized that his country has consistently called for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all captives, and a surge of humanitarian aid in the war-torn Gaza. "Recalling that recognizing a state of Palestine, which we did with Norway and Spain, and which other countries have done, is not a hostile act, and should not be seen as a hostile act," he added.

Martin affirmed Dublin's support for the utilization of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) where there can be international accountability for war crimes in any part of the world, including in Gaza. "I find it very difficult to comprehend how those acts could be described as hostile acts. They are not hostile acts," the minister stated.

Last week, Ireland officially joined South Africa's genocide case against Israel at the ICJ following government approval and called on the court to "broaden its interpretation" of what constitutes genocide.

Martin noted that there has been huge anger on all streets across Europe over the killing of innocent Palestinian people by the Israeli regime in Gaza since October 7, 2023. "What's happening in northern Gaza at the moment, for example, in my view, is beyond any moral compass," he said.

He emphasized that Israel should open up Gaza to the international community and allow the media to bear witness to the ongoing events. "I have no doubt if that happened, that the world would be shocked in terms of the level of destruction that has occurred there," the minister said.

Martin further noted that Ireland, Spain, Norway, have taken "a lot of hostility," from Israel for their decision to recognize the Palestinian state.

Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris said on Monday that the closure of the Israeli embassy in Dublin was an Israeli ploy to distract from its own actions against the Palestinians.

Ireland will not have its views silenced, Harris told reporters. He added that Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's actions against innocent lives in Gaza and in the West Bank is the "diplomacy of distraction" which is "utterly despicable and should be condemned."

"We shouldn't allow anything to distract from what is happening," Harris emphasized. He said Ireland will continue to "shine a spotlight" on the ongoing events in West Asia.

The prime minister expressed regret over Israel's embassy closure and said Ireland will continue to talk and engage with those who we might "vehemently disagree with".

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