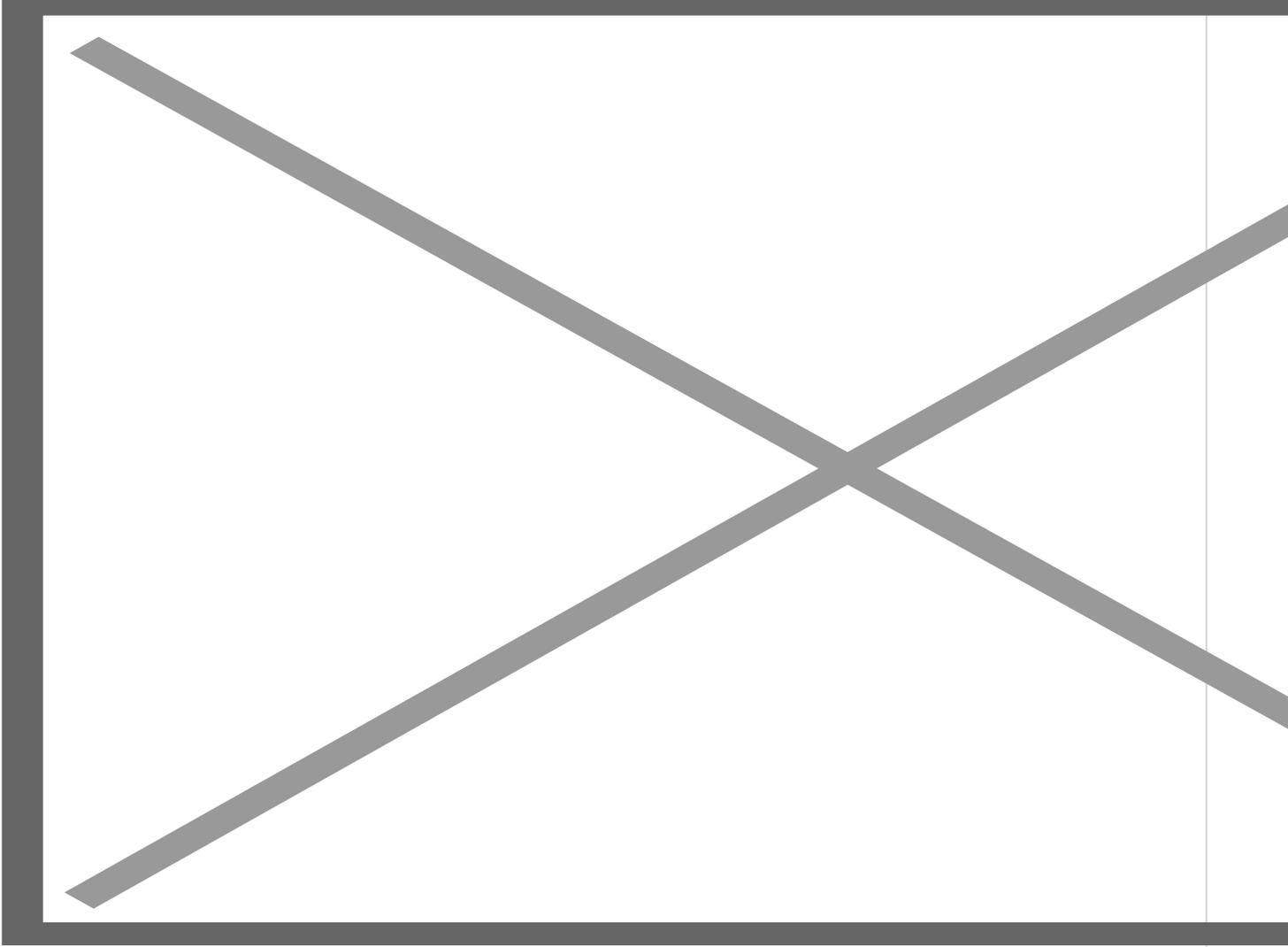


# *Irish leaders to boycott White House event over Trump's Gaza plot*

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Sinn Fein deputy leader Michelle O'Neill speaks next to Sinn Fein President Mary Lou McDonald.

Dublin, February 22 (RHC)-- Leaders of Sinn Fein, Ireland's largest opposition party, have announced that they will not attend the White House's annual St. Patrick's Day event in protest to the proposed American plan to ethnically cleanse the Gaza strip.

The party's senior members, such as party leader Mary Lou McDonald and Northern Irish First Minister Michelle O'Neill, have announced that they will boycott the March 17 event.

Speaking on the decision on Friday, O'Neill said "the recent comments by the U.S. president around the mass expulsion of the Palestinian people from Gaza is just simply something that I cannot ignore."

"There is an onus on us to act when we believe the US administration is wrong, catastrophically so in the case of Palestine," she added.

Meanwhile, McDonald said that she could not visit Washington "while there was a threat of mass expulsion hanging over the Palestinian people."

St. Patrick's Day is an annual festival celebrating Irish culture and heritage. While not an official US holiday, it is widely observed, especially by Americans of Irish descent.

Since the 1950s, the White House has hosted annual celebrations, typically featuring Irish officials presenting the U.S. President with a bowl of shamrock, Ireland's national symbol.

During the early days of his administration, Trump suggested that the people of Gaza must relocate from the strip to countries such as Egypt and Jordan. On February 4, Trump proposed that the U.S. could take over Gaza and turn it into the "Riviera" of West Asia after clearing the Palestinians out, and resettling them elsewhere.

Rebuilding Gaza will be a key issue, after Trump cited reconstruction as justification for relocating its 2.4 million people.

Trump's provocative proposal came after the Israeli regime failed to realize its objectives in the war on the coastal strip for over 15 months, during which the regime killed at least 48,319 Palestinians, mostly women and children.

The Israeli genocidal war also left Gaza largely in ruins, with the United Nations recently estimating that rebuilding would cost more than \$53 billion.

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