

Speech

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# Minister Sean Fleming delivers Ireland's national statement at UN General Assembly

From [Department of Foreign Affairs \(/en/organisation/departments-of-foreign-affairs/\)](/en/organisation/departments-of-foreign-affairs/)

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## Check against delivery

President of the General Assembly,

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

We gather at an important moment.

World leaders have agreed a Pact for the Future, which charts a way forward to meet the challenges facing us as a global community.

To do so, we must honour existing commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

And be ready to adapt to new and emerging challenges.

It requires us to address the interlocking crises of climate change, conflict, hunger, injustice and under-development.

And it requires us to protect the means to achieve progress.

For generations, the multilateral system - with the UN Charter at its heart - has driven our best advances.

I believe we have a shared responsibility to bring about a world in which each of us can thrive in safety, dignity and peace.

We are accountable to those who will follow us.

And accountable to each other to uphold the UN Charter;

To stand up for international law;

To ensure the peaceful settlement of disputes;

To defend the universal and indivisible nature of human rights.

And to pass on to the next generation a functioning multilateral system.

Mr President

The rules-based international order and the international human rights system are our greatest assets in achieving and sustaining peace.

Human rights provide a common binding framework.

We believe every State has a duty to support and strengthen the international human rights regime.

And to defend it where it is challenged.

That is why Ireland is seeking membership of the Human Rights Council for the period 2027-2029.

We are doing so because we are deeply committed to human rights.

We wish to further contribute to the UN human rights system, and the valuable work of

the Human Rights Council.

We hope that we can count on the support of many in this room who share our belief in the values and principles we have collectively established.

We also have a duty to uphold international law and the international legal order.

Ireland is fully committed to supporting the essential work of the International Court of Justice, and calls on all states to abide by its rulings.

Ireland is also wholly committed to the international criminal justice system.

The International Criminal Court is the cornerstone of that system, and must be allowed to pursue its mandate without fear or favour.

We condemn all attempts to intimidate or threaten the ICC, its officials or those cooperating with the Court.

There can be no impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern.

Mr President,

We are seeing a global backlash against the human rights of women and girls.

The gender persecution in Afghanistan stands out for its cruelty and must be denounced.

In too many parts of our world, we see hard-won progress threatened and even reversed.

We cannot accept this.

Our commitment to gender equality must be non-negotiable.

We must also address the unacceptable rise in attacks on the rights to life, liberty, and security of LGBTQI+ people in all corners of the world.

And we must unequivocally condemn all forms of racism, intolerance and hatred, including Antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, and persecution of Christians.

Mr President,

We are already seeing the destructive impacts of climate change.

It is clear that climate change is a driver and multiplier of instability and conflict.

Ireland worked hard to address this during our recent term on the Security Council.

Climate change threatens us all.

From Small Island Developing States in the Pacific, the Caribbean, and elsewhere, to countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Those who have contributed least to climate change are among the most vulnerable to its impacts.

This is an enormous injustice.

As we approach COP 29, we must do everything we can to reduce fossil fuel emissions.

As a fellow island state, Ireland is working to support adaptation and Loss and Damage activities.

We need collective action, at speed and at scale to avert the most catastrophic impacts of the climate crisis.

Ireland – and our EU partners – will play our role.

At the UN last year, and again in the Pact for the Future, we have recommitted to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Now we need to act with urgency as progress on their targets falters.

Ireland's international development budget is at record levels and, per capita, we are

one of the strongest providers of humanitarian assistance.

We are firmly committed to global solidarity, and to reaching the furthest behind first.

We will maintain our focus on action to end hunger and malnutrition, and especially the needless global scandal of child wasting and stunting.

We will remain champions of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Mr President,

We face the very real prospect of regional war in the Middle East.

I am deeply concerned at the spiralling violence and the situation in Lebanon.

Hezbollah has long been a malign actor in Lebanon and in the region.

We have consistently condemned its attacks.

But massive and ongoing Israeli airstrikes on densely populated areas are causing indiscriminate death of civilians and destruction on a vast scale.

Hundreds of thousands have been forced to flee.

A ground war would be truly catastrophic.

All parties to conflict have an obligation to abide by International Humanitarian Law.

There can be no exceptions.

I call on all parties to immediately de-escalate, to step back from the brink, and to exercise restraint.

And I call on all states that have influence, including Iran, to use it constructively.

We need to create the space for political and diplomatic solutions, and to ensure urgent

humanitarian assistance can get to those in desperate need.

The violence must stop now.

Mr President,

The scale of death, destruction and human misery in Gaza is truly horrific and completely unacceptable.

Ireland has consistently condemned Hamas for its heinous attacks in Israel on 7 October.

The taking of hostages is unconscionable.

However, Israel's response has been and is completely disproportionate.

We need an immediate ceasefire and hostage release deal, followed by a massive surge of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

Instead, we are seeing an alarming escalation of the conflict, in the West Bank and now to Lebanon.

The violence and killing must stop.

It has long been clear that the only viable basis for lasting peace and security, for Israelis and Palestinians, is a two-State solution.

The recent adoption by the General Assembly of a Resolution on the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice is a step in the right direction.

The international community must now act to implement it.

Ireland supports the global initiative launched last week here in New York to support the two State solution,

I encourage States to join in this shared effort.

Mr. President,

Russia's unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine represents a severe threat to the global multilateral system.

A challenge to the norm that borders cannot be changed by force should concern us all.

We should all be deeply concerned by defiance of the UN Charter by a Permanent Member of the Security Council.

Undermining the rules based order, on which each of our security depends, should concern us all.

The transfer of ballistic missiles by Iran and North Korea to Russia for use in Ukraine is unacceptable.

These transfers are unlawful and threaten international peace and security – they must stop.

This is not just a European security concern.

This is a war with global impacts – on food security, and on energy and commodity prices.

Too often, it is those least able to respond who suffer the most.

And it is a colonial war, about annexing the territory and destroying the identity of a UN member state.

That is why Ireland is committed to holding Russia accountable for its actions, and to bringing about a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

As the global community reaffirmed at the first "Summit on Peace in Ukraine", the UN Charter can and must serve as a basis to achieve that peace.

It is shocking that Russia has threatened the use of nuclear weapons in this conflict.

The mere possession of nuclear weapons brings the risk of human and environmental disaster.

That is why Ireland will propose a resolution at this General Assembly to further our collective scientific understanding of the dangers these weapons pose.

I urge all countries to join that resolution.

We cannot allow a new nuclear arms race.

We must also act to prevent another arms race – for weapons beyond human control – and do so urgently given the pace of technological development.

Ireland supports the Secretary General's call to conclude a treaty on autonomous weapons systems by the end of 2026.

Mr. President,

The Horn of Africa, and the Sahel region, are beset by multiple overlapping crises, from food insecurity, drought and flooding, to conflict.

Addressing them means working for sustainable development and human rights.

The situation in Sudan is appalling.

12 million people forced from their homes.

Widespread reports of abuses against civilians, particularly women and girls.

25 million face crisis levels of hunger—and now famine.

We need to see urgent action.

We demand a ceasefire, humanitarian access, protection of civilians and accountability for human rights abuses.

We must do whatever it takes to pressure the parties to come back to the negotiating



table, and bring to an end this destructive cycle of violence.

And we need to see accountability for those who have committed these atrocities.

Mr. President,

As we witness these harrowing conflicts, we must not accept this situation.

The world as it is now is not the world as it should be.

We have seen what can be achieved by cooperation through this organisation.

That the international community has managed to come together in a time of heightened tension to endorse that vision, to agree a way forward, a Pact for the Future, shows us what can be achieved.

We continue to be united by our shared humanity.

Ireland will work hard with others during this General Assembly to follow through on our words with action.

Thank you.

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