

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Amnesty urges Tánaiste to investigate Irish company role in illegal Israeli fence/wall**

Following a meeting with Cement Roadstone Holdings (CRH) yesterday, Amnesty International's Irish Section is calling on Tánaiste Mary Harney TD, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, to investigate the company's probable links to the construction of Israel's controversial and illegal fence/wall in the West Bank.

"Is the Tánaiste aware that the EU and the Irish Government have both strongly condemned the building of the fence/wall as illegal under international law? Is she aware that CRH have conceded that, in all probability, cement from a company in which they have a shareholding is being used to build the fence/wall?" asked Colm Ó Cuanacháin, Secretary General of Amnesty International's Irish Section.

"The fence/wall is in violation of international human rights and humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. It also contravenes the UN human rights norms for business. CRH must take immediate steps to ensure that its products are not used in the construction of the fence/wall. The company should develop a human rights policy as a matter of urgency, and make a clear statement on the impact of its activities in Israel and the Occupied Territories on human rights," said Amnesty International.

In a declaration by the Irish Presidency on February 11 in Strasbourg, Irish Minister of State for European Affairs Dick Roche said Israel must stop building the fence/wall. He deplored the "regrettably uncompromising" attitude of the Israeli government, and noted the EU's opposition to the fence/wall.

"The Tánaiste must ensure that Government policy is consistent, and that Irish companies apply the same human rights standards abroad as they would at home. She has a duty to investigate whether or not Irish companies may be contributing to human rights violations or the breach of international law," said Ó Cuanacháin.

Close to 90% of the route of the fence/wall is on Palestinian land inside the West Bank, encircling Palestinian towns and villages and cutting off communities and families from each other, separating farmers from their land and Palestinians from their places of work and education and health care facilities and other essential services.

"Amnesty International does not take a position on the investment or divestment strategies of any company. However, we are calling on CRH to acknowledge their responsibilities, and to use their legitimate influence to promote and protect human rights." said Ó Cuanacháin.

**For further comment/background and interviews contact Amnesty on 01 677 6361:  
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