



An Election for Human Rights

Friday, 29 November 2004 is an important date for you to use your voice to act for human rights. The next government is being formed at a watershed moment in history, during an era when the international rule of law is being cast aside by rule-breaking governments across the world, both as perpetrators and allies of war crimes. Ultimately, civilians have and will continue to pay the highest price. This, combined with an ever worsening housing crisis at home and a climate disaster that has already claimed lives and the livelihoods of millions worldwide, make your vote matter more than ever before.

We have brought together some key points that Amnesty International consider to be important when choosing to vote for human rights.

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

While conflicts rage around the world, commitments made by the new Government on the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory will be the litmus test of how it will live up to Ireland's longstanding reputation as a global champion of international human rights and humanitarian law.

The next government must:

- demand that the USA and EU member states, including Germany, cease supplying arms to Israel immediately, on the known basis that they are being used, or carry a clear risk of being used, to commit war crimes
- immediately advance the Control of Economic Activity (Occupied Territories) Bill 2018 in its aim to ban trade in goods and services from illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory
- press the EU to ban trade and settlement goods and financial activities that facilitate the maintenance or construction of settlements or settlements infrastructure in the OPT
- press EU and member states to review EU-Israel cooperation to identify and address aspects that violate international law, including by maintaining Israel's unlawful presence in the OPT.

On 17 September, the UN General Assembly voted to end Israel's unlawful occupation of the OPT within 12 months. The time is now for the Irish government to:

- name and address the root cause of this crisis, Israel's cruel system of apartheid rule over Palestinians and the unlawful 57 year long occupation.

GLOBAL CLIMATE CRISIS

The global climate crisis represents the single greatest threat to humanity, and we need to see concrete commitments at domestic and international level by the new government.

The next government must:

- provide clear and meaningful commitments on climate justice
- massively scale up and advocate for needs-based climate financing and a full, fast, fair and funded phase-out of fossil fuels across all sectors
- join other governments in calling for a fossil-fuel non-proliferation treaty
- provide tangible responses to the Environmental Protection Agency's conclusion that Ireland's policies, plans and regulations are "entirely inadequate to deliver a healthy environment".



REFUGEE AND MIGRANT RIGHTS

The next Government should commit unequivocally to defending and protecting refugee and migrants' rights - globally, in the EU, and at home.

The next government must:

- firmly defend the rule of law and the EU's commitment to the global refugee protection system and the human right of people to seek asylum
- commit to ensuring the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum will be implemented to the highest possible human rights standards
- ensure that member states take every step to avoid widespread detention and containment at borders
- firmly reject proposals to establish 'return hubs' outside the EU, or 'externalising' or 'offshoring' refugee protection responsibilities beyond EU borders
- support the establishment of truly independent, transparent and human right compliant EU border monitoring mechanisms.

HOUSING CRISIS

“Housing has been treated as a private investment opportunity, not as a social good and a human right that everyone has a right to enjoy.”

Stephen Bowen, Executive Director Amnesty Ireland

As we face into a worsening housing crisis there must be a commitment to embed and strengthen economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR), including in Ireland's foreign policy on human rights.

The next government must:

- put the human right to adequate and affordable housing at the centre of the State's planning and decision-making on housing
- commit to fundamental and constitutional reform and call a referendum on the right to housing during the early lifetime of this next government, compelling a redirection of government law and policy-making on housing towards the needs of people, rather than the market
- introduce a new cabinet-level ministerial role that focuses specifically on human rights and integrate ESCR across all Government departments and public bodies.



LGBTI+ RIGHTS

The promotion and protection of the rights of LGBTI+ persons is a longstanding foreign policy priority for the Irish Government and while we have seen many important advances in Ireland, some significant gaps remain. The next government must:

- provide adequate trans healthcare and trans-respecting healthcare
- ban conversion therapy targeting LGBTI+ people, including children
- commit to extending legal gender recognition to people under 16 years of age and non-binary people.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

As civic space around the world shrinks, and governments' increasingly use technologies that stifle protest, harass minority communities and violate everyone's right to privacy, it is paramount that the freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly is safeguarded.

The next government must:

- ensure Garda policies and guidelines on the policing of protests, especially in a context where excessive or unnecessary use of force by police is reported, are publicly available
- adopt a National Plan on the Right to Protest
- commit to abandoning the last government's plan to permit Garda use of facial recognition technologies
- support demands for a ban on the development, sales or usage of facial recognition technologies by big tech companies that are being used for harmful mass surveillance
- amend the Electoral Act to protect civil society space at home, by removing the harmful and unintended impact of this Act on civil society organisations' freedom of association and expression.

DOMINANCE OF BIG TECH, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND CORPORATIONS

The global breakdown of the rule of law is likely to be accelerated by the rapid advancement in artificial intelligence (AI) which, coupled with the dominance of Big Tech, risks a "supercharging" of human rights violations. Not only on a global security level, but violations by Big Tech companies are infiltrating the world of every teenager and young person in Ireland today. Business and Human Rights matter in all our lives.

The government must:

- ensure the new National Plan on Business and Human Rights includes mandatory human rights due diligence to identify, prevent and address human rights abuses, and offer access to justice and effective remedies if people's human rights have been abused by Irish companies
- effectively monitor and hold accountable Big Tech and Data companies
- commit to the immediate implementation of the recommendations from the Oireachtas Committee on Children report, 'Safeguarding children in the age of AI', including more effective age verification measures, and importantly a legal requirement that platforms' recommender systems be off by default for children under 16 years



DOMINANCE OF BIG TECH, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND CORPORATIONS

contd.

- Manage development of emerging dangerous technologies such as lethal autonomous weapons
- Ensure taxation models are human rights compliant in terms of equality and non-discrimination

ADDITIONAL KEY ISSUES THAT WOULD BE A VOTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Commitment to:

- **TORTURE FREE TRADE TREATY:** the prevention of torture and other ill-treatment through supporting the ongoing negotiation of a global Torture-Free Trade Treaty and re-affirming Ireland's continued commitment and support to this treaty.
- **NORTHERN IRELAND LEGACY ACT:** the new Irish Government must maintain its commitment to a legal challenge to the UK Government's widely opposed Northern Ireland Troubles Act at the European Court of Human Rights, so that victims' right to truth justice and reparations can be realised.
- **ADVOCACY OF HATE:** Tackle advocacy of hatred and violence; and add new grounds to the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989
- **LEGACY HUMAN RIGHTS:** a new fit-for-purpose model for ensuring truth, justice and accountability for legacy human rights violations
- **ABORTION:** commit to immediate implementation of the recommendations of the Department of Health's review of the 2018 Act, and progress to full compliance with the WHO Abortion care guidelines.
- **SEX WORKERS:** commit to full decriminalisation of sex work
- **DRUG USE:** decriminalise the possession of drugs for personal use and improve and instead expand health and rehab services
- **INTERNATIONAL TRADE:** ensure Ireland's trade or other national interests will not prevent it from engaging robustly on human rights violations in other states, such as Saudi Arabia or China.

Finally, if the next government is to place Ireland as a true global leader on the world stage, we call on it to become the world's conscience on human rights. They must lead on naming and challenging the forces behind growing authoritarian practices around the world. They must work with partners to equip the public to recognise and see through the toxic narratives, language and rhetoric that is being generated and amplified, and they must be a loud and clear voice providing counter-narratives and solutions. A government that can stand forth and do this, will be a beacon of light as humanity navigates these treacherous waters.

To find out more information about the above issues, please see our full election manifesto at www.amnesty.ie/GE24