Re: Alarm at Irish Government Plans to Dismantle Ireland's Triple Lock

Dear Taoiseach Micheál Martin,

We write to you as international peace organizations with decades of experience advocating for an end to all wars.

For many years Ireland has been a courageous voice on the international stage proudly championing peace initiatives even when doing so meant challenging the interests of the world's most powerful nations. At the height of the Cold War, Minister Frank Aiken led efforts at the United Nations (UN) towards the creation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Similarly, Ireland advanced processes on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, cluster munitions, and anti-personnel landmines. Moreover, Ireland is the only nation with a continuous presence on UN and UN mandated peace-support operations since 1958. Since the foundation of the state, Ireland has upheld its constitutional commitment to resolving international disputes peacefully, adopting a policy of neutrality that has kept Ireland out of foreign wars. Though this made Ireland an outlier among many of its European peers, it demonstrated a clear and unwavering commitment to peace. Ireland's neutrality has served it well, earning it credibility and legitimacy on the global sphere as a peace-maker, a reputation that the people of Ireland are rightly immensely proud of.

In recent years however, the Irish government has strengthened ties with EU military structures and NATO in an apparent violation of Irish neutrality and in contravention of political and legal commitments made to the Irish people in the context of the Nice and Lisbon treaties. For example, in March 2023, the government announced the withdrawal of Irish peace-keepers from the UN mission in the Golan Heights to 'ensure that the Defence Forces have the capacity to fulfil their commitment to the EU Battlegroup 2024/2025'. Moreover, Irish troops participate in military training exercises with NATO and EU battlegroups. This repositioning away from peace-keeping towards war-making takes place against a backdrop in which U.S. military planes regularly use Shannon Airport, Israeli cargo flights transporting weapons fly through Irish airspace unimpeded, and an Irish-based arms lobby group whose members include one of the world's largest arms firms, Lockheed Martin, has been actively lobbying the Irish Department of Defence.

We write today because **as organizations that oppose war and cherish peace, we are alarmed to learn that Ireland imminently plans to bring a draft law to undo Ireland's Triple Lock** before cabinet. We consider that the Triple Lock is a central component of Ireland's neutral position because it essentially stands as a bulwark against deploying Irish troops unless there is a UN mandate to do so. In other words, the Triple Lock guarantees that troop deployment may only take place under the

auspices of the UN system, as guarantor of international peace and security. Removing the Triple Lock may sound the death knell on Irish neutrality.

In your capacity as opposition leader you described the Triple Lock as being 'at the core of our neutrality'. You now claim otherwise and your party regularly instructs the public not to conflate neutrality with the Triple Lock. Similarly, you acknowledged that although 'the United Nations is not working as it should ... we must not abandon it as an essential part of the international system'. Why, at this particular juncture in global affairs, has your government decided to 'abandon' this 'essential part of the international system'? Why has operating within the UN system suddenly become intolerable? This is particularly difficult to comprehend considering that there are currently hundreds of Irish blue-helmets deployed on active UN missions keeping the peace around the world. Is the government planning to abandon these efforts to instead deploy troops on missions that do not have multilateral support? If Ireland acts outside the remit of the UN Charter, a foundational document of international law, and deploys troops on EU or NATO missions, it may quickly find itself in direct conflict with the world's most powerful armies, some of which have nuclear warheads at their disposal. Surely the benefits of operating within the UN system far outweigh the risks associated with operating outside it? There are no good arguments for dismantling the Triple Lock. By undoing it, Ireland will significantly weaken its commitment to the UN system, UN peace-keeping and to multilateralism. This would come at a time when the UN faces an unprecedented challenge in the context of Israel's genocidal war on Palestine, where the UN has come under fire both literally and figuratively.

Ireland is a small island nation. Its contribution on the global stage has been immense, punching far above its weight to promote peace and reject war. Considering that a recent opinion poll showed that 75 percent of Ireland's population favours maintaining Ireland's current policy of neutrality, it would appear that your government has no mandate whatsoever to revoke the Triple Lock. To the contrary, in a healthy democracy a government would transform such overwhelming popular support into concrete action by holding a referendum to enshrine neutrality in the Irish constitution.

At a time when the world appears to be on the brink of a global war and potential nuclear catastrophe, we urgently need global leaders to courageously face down warmongers and redouble their commitment to peace and neutrality, to genuine multilateralism, and to upholding the rule of law. Protecting the Triple Lock would send a message to the Irish people and to the global community that Ireland intends to do precisely that.

Yours in peace,

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