

After uproar, Dublin shelves plan to remove Chaim Herzog's name from park

Renaming proposal faced antisemitism accusations; Ireland reportedly to drop move to boycott Israeli settlement products

By Lahav Harkov December 1, 2025



Simon Harris (3rd L) and Micheal Martin (C) speak to press after the forming of the government and election of Taoiseach was suspended until tomorrow morning on January 22, 2025 in Dublin, Ireland.

A vote to remove sixth Israeli President Chaim Herzog's name from a public park was taken off of Dublin City Council's agenda, after sparking an uproar in the Irish Jewish community, Jerusalem and Washington over the weekend.

Herzog, father of current Israeli President Isaac Herzog, was born in Belfast and grew up in Dublin, and was the son of Ireland's Chief Rabbi Yitzhak HaLevi Herzog, who later became Israel's first chief rabbi. Chaim Herzog fought in the British Army in World War II, taking part in the liberation of Bergen-Belsen, and was the head of IDF intelligence and Israeli ambassador to the U.N. — famously tearing up its “Zionism is racism” resolution — before serving as president in 1983-1993.

The park in Dublin was named after Herzog in 1995, to coincide with the 3,000th anniversary of Jerusalem's establishment. It is adjacent to Ireland's only Jewish school and close to major Orthodox and Progressive synagogues.

The plan to remove Herzog's name came after a campaign to replace it with the name of Hind Rajab, a Palestinian girl killed during the Gaza war. Another reported proposal was to name the park "Free Palestine."

One member of the Dublin City Council Commemorations and Naming committee, Conor Reddy, wrote a post on X on Oct. 7, 2023 sharing a photo of a bulldozer from Gaza tearing down a barrier with Israel and added the text: "Tear down the fences, demolish the walls." In another post that day, he said, "Resistance is heroic." The following day, he wrote on X that the massive Hamas terrorist attacks "should be celebrated and supported ... [and] should be embraced by everyone who values justice ... It is beautiful."

The entire naming committee, except for one member, voted last week in favor of excising Herzog's name, and to initiate a consultation process to select a new name.

The next step would have been for the full Dublin City Council to vote on the name removal, which was scheduled for Monday. However, Dublin City Council Chief Executive Richard Shakespeare announced on Sunday that the vote would be withdrawn because the council's naming committee did not follow the proper procedure. In addition, Dublin Mayor Ray McAdam said the committee had not provided the council with a sufficiently detailed report to make an informed decision.

The change to the council's agenda came after leading figures in the Irish government, as well as in Jerusalem and Washington, expressed opposition to renaming the park.

Though Ireland's national government has taken the most anti-Israel stance in Europe since the Oct. 7, 2023 attacks, Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin called on Sunday for the motion to rename Herzog Park to be withdrawn.

"The proposal would erase the distinctive and rich contribution to Irish life of the Jewish community over many decades ... The proposal is a denial of our history and will, without any doubt, be seen as antisemitic," he said in a statement.

Irish Foreign Minister Helen McEntee noted that Herzog "is an important figure for many people, particularly for members of Ireland's Jewish community. The government has been openly critical of the policies and actions of the government of Israel in Gaza and the West Bank ... Renaming a

Dublin park in this way — to remove the name of an Irish Jewish man — has nothing to do with this and has no place in our inclusive republic. ... I urge Dublin City Councillors to vote against it.”

Irish Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Simon Harris said he agreed with McEntee and called the proposal “offensive.” Minister for European Affairs and Defense Thomas Byrne said that Herzog’s “story is an Irish story,” calling for the council to drop the proposal.

Ireland is also pulling its “Occupied Territories Bill” to boycott Israeli products from the West Bank in light of a “changed political climate” as a result of the ceasefire in Gaza, the Irish Mail on Sunday reported. The legislation faced legal challenges due to its violation of European Union trade rules, and, as several members of Congress pointed out, could run afoul of U.S. states’ laws penalizing those who boycott Israel and damage relations between Washington and Dublin.

Former Irish Justice Minister Alan Shatter told Jewish Insider that the government responses to the proposed Herzog Park name change, which came about 24 hours after the announcement from Dublin City Council, arose from concern in the government “about the bad international publicity. ... I think they’re a little freaked by all the international condemnation,” much of which came from Jerusalem and Washington.

The city council is independent and does not have to abide by the national government’s direction on naming matters, and parties to the left of the current government have a majority on the council. As such, removing Herzog’s name may have had majority support despite government party leaders’ opposition.

Reddy posted on X that the vote “is being pulled from the agenda after bad faith smears from Zionists [and] Americans. There is nothing antisemitic about removing the name [and] there was nothing wrong with the procedure that brought us to this point! Shocking.”

Israeli President Isaac Herzog’s office released a statement on Saturday that the name change would “harm the legacy of the sixth President of the State of Israel, the late Chaim Herzog, as well as harming the unique expression of the historical connection between the Irish and Jewish peoples. ... Removing the Herzog name, if it happens, would be a shameful and disgraceful move. We hope that the legacy of a figure at the forefront of establishing the relations

between Israel and Ireland, and the fight against antisemitism and tyranny, will still get the respect it deserves today.

Former Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Herzog, another one of Chaim Herzog's sons, called the proposed name change "sad," and said it was "painful to see how Ireland, once home to a proud, thriving Jewish community, has become the scene of raging antisemitism. Ireland is now one of the most virulent anti-Israel countries in Europe, blurring the line between criticizing Israeli policies and questioning Israel's right to exist." He called on Jewish organizations in the U.S. and worldwide to speak up in "denouncing this shame."

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar said that the proposed name change showed that "there is no decision more accurate and just than my decision to close our embassy in Dublin," adding that the city "has become the capital of antisemitism in the world."

"The Dublin Municipality has decided to remove the name of Chaim Herzog ... What cannot be removed is the disgrace of the Irish antisemitic and anti-Israeli obsession," Sa'ar added.

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) posted on X: "When you think it couldn't get worse in Ireland regarding animosity toward Israel and the Jewish people, it just did. ... I don't know what the people of Dublin are trying to say, but this is what I hear: A complete turning upside down of history when it comes to the Jewish people and the state of Israel. Modern Ireland ... unfortunately has become a cesspool of antisemitism."

Graham later wrote that he was "glad to hear efforts to rename Herzog Park in Dublin have been rejected."

U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee called the proposal "an incredible insult to the Herzog family whose roots are deep in Ireland. Let's hope decent Irish people stop this madness!"

After the motion was withdrawn, Huckabee wrote that "Ireland still has rational and thoughtful people ... Hopefully this ends a very targeted form of bigotry pushed by a few people who should be ashamed of themselves."

The Jewish Representative Council of Ireland stated that the motion "sends a hurtful and isolating message to a small minority community that has contributed to Ireland for centuries. We call on Dublin City Councillors to reject

this motion. The removal of the Herzog name from this park would be widely understood as an attempt to erase our Irish Jewish history.”

Shatter, a lifelong Dublin resident who had a 14-year national political career, lamented on X that “Ireland’s politics ... has become systematically antisemitic.”

Following the proposal’s withdrawal, Shatter said that “Dublin City Council’s Mayor should publicly apologize to the Jewish community for the stress [and] hurt caused [and] also apologize to the Herzog family.”

“Until the government adopts a more balanced approach to the complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, demands Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups end their violence and like [the Provisional Irish Republican Army] decommission their arms and abandons its inflammatory rhetoric, antisemitism in Ireland will continue to escalate and there will be further egregious, shameful examples,” Shatter wrote.

If Dublin eventually moves to change Herzog Park’s name, Shatter told JI that there may be legal recourse against it, should the council move to do so.

“In my analysis, the city council has violated its legal obligations, both international and domestic,” he said. “They failed to engage in any consultative process with the Jewish community in Dublin, failed to communicate its intentions to the Herzog family and violated its own development plan.”

The plan in question requires the city to “consider cultural and minority sensitivities.”

In addition, as a member of the European Union, Ireland is meant to protect minority cultural rights, he noted.

In 2014, a plaque marking Chaim Herzog’s birthplace in Belfast was removed following multiple occurrences of vandalism and amid concern for the safety of the building’s staff and nearby residents.