

Foyle Ethical Investment Campaign (FEIC)
Derry Anti-War Coalition (DAWC)
Swords To Ploughshares (STOP)

Black Shamrock: What the Black Shamrock Stands For

On 17th March (St Patrick's Day) 2022 we are relaunching the Black Shamrock to reassert and make visible our commitment to Irish neutrality.



As the European Union accelerates its movement towards militarization, the Black Shamrock is a call to not only protect our commitment to neutrality in Ireland but to expand and deepen our approach to *principled neutrality* as others would seek to use Russia's criminal invasion of Ukraine to force a realignment with a new European security order when in fact, the Russian invasion signifies a profound failure of the current international security order created in the image of competing hegemony.

We deplore a security order that has placed the ordinary people of Ukraine in the devastating position of having to resort to arms.

We assert that there has never been a more pressing need to re-imagine local, regional and global security: an indivisible commitment to human and ecological security, including climate justice.

In the Gandhian spirit of ahimsa (non-violence as a way of life and spirit of self-care), we also invite wearers of the Black Shamrock to recognize the deep links between structures of and conditions for violence (e.g. patriarchy, capitalism, the security state, the military industrial complex) and our collective efforts to expand freedoms to make individual and community decisions that contribute to mutual flourishing of people and planet. We can do so by embodying non-violence in all areas of life and struggle, and in our expressions of citizenship through care for and protection of the environment, solidarity with peoples in struggle, and modes of consumption e.g. supporting campaigns like the Palestinian BDS movement or Fairtrade.

We wear the Black Shamrock as a statement of our recommitment to a new vision of ‘human security’ founded on human solidarity, social justice, human rights, the rights of nature and a post-extractivist vision of prosperity achieved within the nine planetary boundaries, including a restoration of the stability of our climate system in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The original Black Shamrock campaign back in 2006¹ was prompted by a need to make visible citizen opposition to a series of Government-sanctioned attacks on Ireland’s neutrality. These attacks included the use of Shannon Airport by US military on their way to and from wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, and for stopover flights engaged in illegal rendition.

The symbol also highlighted successful resistance to Government-sanctioned investment in defence software, notably the decommissioning of the Raytheon Software Plant in Derry.

The Black Shamrock symbol and campaign has taken on a life of its own as a national/international peace symbol. It was used to generate funds for disparate peace campaigns extending to solidarity with earth protectors campaigning against fracking in Leitrim. **Over 50,000 are already in circulation!**

In the interim years – while we can celebrate opposition to Raytheon – the arms trade has, nevertheless, become more embedded within our economies across the island.

¹ **The Black Shamrock** is a symbol of resistance. In wearing it, all of those who do so declare opposition to any Irish involvement in war, be it economic, strategic or logistical. We also call for a new socially and ecologically informed vision of human security, which places economics and the state at the service of human rights, the rights of nature and regenerative economies.

The Black Shamrock campaign is a grassroots non-party political, non-partisan campaign to highlight the views of the majority of people in Ireland and the rest of the world; that we want no part in war and occupation and instruct our leaders to follow Irish and International law and immediately withdraw support from such inhuman folly. The campaign welcomes the support of members of all political parties and none.

The Black Shamrock symbolizes our mourning for all those who died as a result of Irish collaboration in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and all those who have died and are dying still as a result of the devastation those wars have unleashed, for which the airports at Shannon, Aldergrove and Baldonnel became “pit-stops”. It also symbolizes our resistance to the ongoing deliberate assault on Irish Neutrality.

The European Union's drift towards militarization has been deeply influenced by the international arms trade lobby at a time marked by growing popular demands for a new vision of human security founded on Human Rights, Climate Justice, the Planetary Boundaries and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2022, we also join with supporters of the Downpatrick Declaration in calling for a recommitment to the Republic's constitutional commitment to ***'the pacific settlement of international disputes...[and] the generally recognized principles of international law'*** (Article 29) and to the Declaration of Support for the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, in which leaders on both parts of the island endorsed ***'exclusively peaceful means of resolving differences on political issues' and rejected 'any use or threat of force'***. (Declaration of Support, section 4).