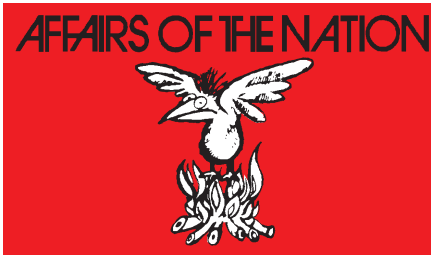


**AFFAIRS OF THE NATION**



**GAA GAMES ON GAZA AND ALLIANZ**

DID THE GAA find that deliberations on its controversial Allianz sponsorship deal were simplified by the existence on its management committee of Joan Kehoe, a high-flying asset management executive with links to global finance firms? These firms in turn have strong links to companies with Israeli interests and personnel.



Joan Kehoe

Kehoe, who has a glittering CV in the global financial world, is also a member of the GAA's national management committee, which endorsed the Ethics and Integrity Commission's approval of the Allianz deal. This flew in the face of a United Nations report naming Allianz as financially assisting Israeli carnage against Palestinians.

Much of the GAA's defence has been that the world is an interconnected maze, making it hard to draw lines or moral edicts. The GAA, in a memorable statement, denied that Allianz had any involvement with the IDF or entities involved in Gaza, saying: "Any such relationship is with a sibling or cousin company."

As well as serving on the management committee, Kehoe is chairperson of Kilmacud Crokes GAA, one of the largest GAA clubs in Ireland with nearly 5,000 members. She presided over its recent AGM, where a motion to oppose the Allianz sponsorship – sanctioned by the management committee of which she is a member – was rejected.

Kehoe could be in a position to comment on such situations as exist in Gaza or the occupied territories given the financial links

she has made in recent times. She has most recently been earmarked, via her company Alchelyst – a fund administrator for asset managers – to lead a new private markets servicing platform that has been backed by investment firms Motive Partners and Apollo Global Management, both heavy hitters in the world of private markets.

It is the latter two companies – the financial backers of Kehoe's new position – that could provide much information, intelligence even, on the state of play in the war-torn region.

Motive Partners, a private equity firm with an emphasis on technology, has made many investments in the Israeli tech industry, with its biggest to date being the 2023 acquisition of the Israeli-founded payments company Splitit. Splitit's HQ is in New York but its state-of-the-art research and development facility is in Israel.

Motive's links to this Israeli sector means it employs individuals with experience in the Israeli defence and technology industry. An interesting individual within Motive's senior

*Continued on page 4*

**AT THE start of this month, the Irish Times announced that the man behind a €30m investment in Waterford Airport is Texan oil billionaire Kelcy Warren, "according to sources with knowledge of the deal". Before Christmas, readers of The Phoenix also had knowledge of the deal (see "Kelcy Warren's Runway", The Phoenix 12/12/25).**

**Companies Office filings last week show that Warren has appointed his right-hand woman, Brooke Seims, as secretary of a new company called Waterford Airport Ltd, while Carrick-on-Suir accountant David Skelly has been installed as a director, alongside the airport's main player here, William Bolster.**

**In Co Kilkenny, Donald Trump acolyte Warren is best known for his purchase of the wonderful Castletown Cox estate, where he plans to build a whiskey distillery, using a company called The Willy Good Distillery Ltd. Dallas-based Seims is already a director here, as is "manager" Edward Walsh.**

**The shares in the distillery are owed by an entity called Rosebrack Ltd, where Seims and Walsh are again in situ, while the shares here are held by Kelcy Warren and his Delaware-registered Castletown Holdings LLC.**

**Now that he has emerged from the shadows, locals may expect some fireworks from Warren, who has made multiple large donations to Trump and was appointed by the US president to the board of the Kennedy Centre.**

**CUSHNAHAN'S CAPERS**

THE DREADED taxman has just registered a chunky judgment against Goldhawk's old pal, Dublin accountant Nicholas Cushnahan, whose clients have had their share of run-ins with the Revenue.

Readers will recall that a few years ago (see *The Phoenix* 22/2/19) Cushnahan was slapped on the wrist for failing to co-operate with a disciplinary investigation being carried out by the Chartered Accountants Regulatory Board (Carb). He was fined €10,000 and ordered to pay costs of nearly €19,000. This was a repeat performance of his Carb appearance in April 2017, when he was fined €3,000 and ordered to pay the regulator's full costs, some €17,000.

Fans of Goldhawk should be aware of Cushnahan's litany of woes. A number of high-profile medical practitioners – several of whom sued the hapless Nick's firm (Houlihan Cushnahan) in the Four Goldmines – found themselves slapped with sizeable penalties by the taxman, including one Dr Naveed Khawaja, who ended up settling with the Revenue for over €½m last year (see *The Phoenix* 21/8/18).

The claims related to a tax scheme allegedly promoted by Cushnahan's Glashule-based firm. In April 2023, Carb found that Cushnahan had breached the accountancy body's code of ethics when failing to ensure that sufficient documentary evidence existed to support various charges and allowances included in a medical client's accounts (that were the basis for calculating the client's income tax).

The disciplinary tribunal also found Nick had failed to provide appropriate VAT advice or "adequately co-operate" with the Revenue on behalf of his client in relation to a tax audit. Nor had the accountant advised the medic in writing of "the potential risks associated with that client's tax affairs". As a result, Cushnahan received a "severe reprimand", was fined €15,000 and ordered to pay costs of €30,000.

Now the accountant himself has ended up in his own spot of bother with the taxman, who has just registered a judgment against poor Nick for a whopping €1.7m.

Ouch!

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Published by Penfield Enterprises Ltd.

44 Lr Baggot St, Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 661 1062 (No caller I.D.) Fax: (01) 662 4532

Printed by Boylan Web Ltd.

Colour reproduction by Typeform Ltd. ISSN 0790-0562

e-mail: [goldhawk@thephoenix.ie](mailto:goldhawk@thephoenix.ie)

**abc** Jan-Dec 2018, 11,710 [www.abc.org.uk](http://www.abc.org.uk)

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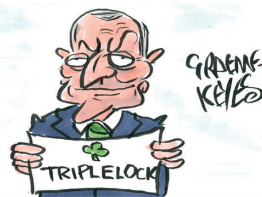
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**NEUTRALITY**



**NEUTRALITY**



**AFFAIRS OF THE NATION**

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executives is Oren Michaely, a member of the company's investment team, who is described in his LinkedIn profile as director of artificial intelligence. A more interesting detail on his LinkedIn data is that of "staff sergeant, Israeli Military Intelligence, 2012-2016, Unit 8200, Military Leadership and Special Operations".

But the most prominent personality by far in these two finance companies is Apollo's CEO and chair, Marc Rowan, listed by Forbes in November 2024 as worth \$8.8bn. Rowan has a history of combatting Palestinian supporters in academe during the recent onslaught in Gaza and was accused by some academics at his Pennsylvania University base of negatively affecting intellectual freedom there.

Rowan and his wife contributed \$1m to Donald Trump's 2020 presidential campaign, so it is not totally surprising that just this month the US president appointed Rowan to what was then described as the Gaza Peace Board. Actually Rowan is on the board's executive committee along with Marco Rubio, Tony Blair and Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner.

Nobody is inferring that Kehoe has played fast and loose by her involvement in the debates surrounding the GAA's most controversial Allianz sponsorship agreement but some pro-Palestinian members believe she should have declared a possible conflict of interest to the management committee and to Kilmacud Crokes.

Goldhawk asked Kehoe several times if she had considered absenting herself from deliberations on the committee and at Crokes. She may well argue that, despite her experience in international finance, she had no idea of the political and military links of her financial backers but she declined to offer any response.

RTE might also consider the manner in which it failed to disclose to *Prime Time* viewers last week the connections of Rob Hartnett, CEO of Sport for Business, who argued against those critical of Allianz. The RTE online article on the controversy mentioned in passing that Allianz was a member of Hartnett's Sport for Business but readers of this article would amount to a small fraction of those who watched the televised *Prime Time* programme, which made no mention of Allianz's membership.

Neither did *Prime Time* mention that RTE and Dublin GAA are members of the same organisation.

**THE BIZARRE world of Iranian dissidents and their western supporters is even more politically eclectic than first appears judging by a recent Sunday Independent article from Mairia Cahill.**

**Goldhawk has tracked the history of interactions between the National Council**



**Meanwhile in Doonbeg.**

**of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) and a group of Irish politicians headed by Independent senator Gerard Craughwell but also including Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael members (see The Phoenix 11/7/25).**

**Now it emerges, courtesy of Cahill, that she and others, including Sinn Féin members, attended a Paris conference some unspecified time ago, where NCRI leader Maryam Rajavi addressed a large crowd.**

**This leaves precious few political formations inside Leinster house that have not tic-tacked with this particular dissident group which, incidentally, still boasts an armed wing (MEK), although it is no longer proscribed since proving its pro-western credentials.**

**Post revolution, NCRI/MEK made a blunder by fighting alongside Saddam Hussein against their own country and then allied itself with the US neo-cons and subsequently with Donald Trump's first administration. Its chief allies in this period were Trump's former national security advisor, John Bolton, and his security advisor, Rudy Giuliani.**

**The peculiar aspect to the Iranian rebels progress in the Irish political world is that is that Taoiseach Micheál Martin has remained dumb about his own attitude, while last year the foreign affairs department made clear its concerns about the NCRI.**

**Cahill, meanwhile, despite her own political journey north and south of the border, seems flummoxed about the way forward in Iran. Pointing to the disputes and contradictions between the varied oppositionists in Iran, she suggested a broad coalition of "conservatives, reformists and civil society" politicians.**

**Good luck with that.**

**IN ANTON WE TRUST**

NEWSTALK RADIO'S new schedule begins next week with Anton Savage – principal shareholder in PR consultancy and media trainer The Communications Clinic – occupying a prime slot as presenter of *Newstalk Breakfast*. Despite his rise in recent years as a programmer, Savage has repeatedly declined to answer questions about potential conflicts of interest between his job as a current affairs broadcaster and his other interest as a shareholder in the Clinic, which exists to improve the image of

its political, business and professional clients.

Recently, in what may have been a preemptive move against any prying scrutiny from media watchdog Coimisiún na Meán, Savage let it be known that he had relinquished his directorship in the PR firm and also placed his 35.66% shareholding in what is known in discreet business circles as a blind trust. Again, Anton refused to elucidate when pressed by the inquisitive Goldhawk to say why he had made these judicious moves.

In particular, Savage declined to say if these efforts to obscure his interests in the Clinic were an acknowledgment that he did face conflicts of interest in his job as a broadcaster (see *The Phoenix* 16/1/26).



**Anton Savage**

Newstalk seems to believe that some of its broadcasting staff may have conflicts of interest that need to be clarified. Article 14.9 of Coimisiún na Meán's Media Service Code says: "A broadcaster shall have and implement appropriate policies and procedures to address any conflicts of interests that may exist or arise in respect of anyone with an editorial involvement in any news or current affairs content."

Meanwhile, article 14.10 demands that any business or financial interest that might affect the objectivity of a programmer should be brought to the attention of the audience of the relevant programme.

Having also declined to answer Goldhawk's queries in this matter – and refusing to attend the Oireachtas media committee's discussion on Coimisiún na Meán's Media Service Code in November – Newstalk appears to have reflected on this light-hearted response to media ethics and transparency.

Late last December managing editor Eric Moylan sent forms to its programmers inviting them to state if they had any potential conflicts of interest to declare.

The Media Service Code was published back in December 2024, well over a year ago, and did not trigger such an initiative from the station in the period since. Surely the issuing of these intrusive forms was not prompted by fears about Anton's Trappist attitude to Goldhawk's invasive queries?