



Resolution Date: 10/06/2014

Resolution Title: Palestine Solidarity Campaign

Resolution for the housing branch 111 to affiliate to Palestine Solidarity Campaign in its own right as a branch, in order to engage members with campaigns to support the rights of Palestinian people- including support for the BDS movement.

Why is Palestine a Union Issue?

The continued occupation of Palestinian territories by Israeli government in defiance of international law, and a host of deliberate policies have had a prolonged and a systematic effect on Palestinian people's right to a livelihood. Since 1967, illegal occupation of vast swathes of Palestinian territories, coupled with incessant building of illegal settlements on occupied land, has encroached further and further on the ability of Palestinian people to support themselves and their families. Through destroying homes, confiscating agricultural land, diverting water from Palestinian villages, building walls and checkpoints to separate farmers from their lands and making it difficult for people to access work, and other illegal actions, Israeli government is increasingly encroaching on basic human rights of Palestinian people. People concerned with social justice and human rights are increasingly taking up the cause of Palestine as a key issue. And even in a context where the economy, job losses and industrial issues are at the forefront of every trade unionist's mind, the Trades Union Congress has sent a clear message that solidarity doesn't stop at our borders, and that the injustice that Palestinians have been subjected to for decades is an issue that unites us all. Anyone who is against racism and inequality looks at Israel's policies towards the Palestinians with increasing horror.

The Trades Union Congress passed policy C18 in 2010, condemning the Israeli blockade of Palestinian territories, particularly the Gaza strip, where there is a severe deterioration in the living conditions of those living there: "Congress believes that the effective annexation of massive swathes of land by Israel in defiance of international law, using walls and checkpoints and destroying Palestinian homes in the process, is a deliberate strategy to undermine the viability of the West Bank and thereby potential for an independent Palestinian state".

The BDS movement.

Since 2005, Palestinian civil society has called for a global movement for a campaign of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it complies with international law and Palestinian right.

For decades, Israel has denied Palestinians their fundamental rights of freedom, equality, and self-determination through ethnic cleansing, colonization, racial discrimination, and military occupation. Despite abundant condemnation of Israeli policies by the UN, other international bodies, and preminent human rights organisations, the world community has failed to hold Israel



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accountable and enforce compliance with basic principles of law. Israel's crimes have continued with impunity.

In view of this continued failure, Palestinian civil society called for a global citizens' response. On July 9 2005, a year after the International Court of Justice's historic advisory opinion on the illegality of Israel's Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), a clear majority of Palestinian civil society called upon their counterparts and people of conscience all over the world to launch broad boycotts, implement divestment initiatives, and to demand sanctions against Israel, until Palestinian rights are recognised in full compliance with international law.

The campaign for boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) urges various forms of boycott against Israel until it meets its obligations under international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands occupied in June 1967 and dismantling the Wall;
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194.

The BDS call was endorsed by over 170 Palestinian political parties, organizations, trade unions and movements. The signatories represent the refugees, Palestinians in the OPT, and Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Boycotts target products and companies (Israeli and international) that profit from the violation of Palestinian rights, as well as Israeli sporting, cultural and academic institutions. Anyone can boycott Israeli goods, simply by making sure that they don't buy produce made in Israel or by Israeli companies. Campaigners and groups call on consumers not to buy Israeli goods and on businesses not to buy or sell them.

Israeli cultural and academic institutions directly contribute to maintaining, defending or whitewashing the oppression of Palestinians, as Israel deliberately tries to boost its image internationally through academic and cultural collaborations. As part of the boycott, academics, artists and consumers are campaigning against such collaboration and 'rebranding'. A growing number of artists have refused to exhibit or play in Israel.

Divestment means targeting corporations complicit in the violation of Palestinian rights and ensuring that the likes of university investment portfolios and pension funds are not used to



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finance such companies. These efforts raise awareness about the reality of Israel's policies and encourage companies to use their economic influence to pressure Israel to end its systematic denial of Palestinian rights.

Sanctions are an essential part of demonstrating disapproval for a country's actions. Israel's membership of various diplomatic and economic forums provides both an unmerited veneer of respectability and material support for its crimes. By calling for sanctions against Israel, campaigners educate society about violations of international law and seek to end the complicity of other nations in these violations.

The Union Branch resolves:

- To affiliate to the PSC as a branch.
- To support the BDS movement through raising awareness of the campaign by inviting speakers and publicising the campaign amongst members.
- To build links with Palestinian trade unions and or women's organisation, NGOs and other civil society institutions in order to take further necessary steps in solidarity with Palestinian people.