

ITUC Statement

The ITUC stands in solidarity with Palestinian workers and urges action to address workers' rights violations in Palestine

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) stands in unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) in its tireless efforts to defend and advance the rights of Palestinian workers. Our colleagues in the PGFTU, who advocate for the rights of Palestinian workers from the frontlines, have reported to us the deteriorating and devastating situation that confronts Palestine's workers.

Residents of several Palestinian towns have faced terror for days because of dozens of armed settlers, who have attacked their homes and conducted acts of violence and arson under the protection of the occupation security forces. The towns of Turmus Ayya and Orif witnessed attacks, arson and vandalism that led to the death of one citizen and the burning of more than 30 houses and 175 cars.

Despite widespread international condemnation of these attacks, the Israeli government announced its intention to establish a thousand new settlement units in the West Bank in clear disregard of its international obligations, as outlined in Resolution No. 446 of 1979 and Resolution No. 2334 of 1996, which explicitly prevent it from continuing settlement expansion.

The ITUC strongly condemns the continuing violation of workers' rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, which includes the denial of fundamental labour protections, restrictions on freedom of association, and discriminatory practices that undermine the livelihoods and dignity of Palestinian workers. We believe that every worker, regardless of their nationality or place of residence, is entitled to fair treatment, decent working conditions, and the right to freely associate and organise.

Settlers aggressively target Palestinians, infiltrate their communities, inflict harm, cause casualties, and destroy homes, vehicles, and agricultural lands. Under the protection of soldiers and with reassurances of impunity from Israeli government officials, the settlers commit acts of violence with a heightened sense of assurance and no fear of the possibility of legal repercussions.

In a significant development, the United States has condemned the escalating violence, signalling a departure from its previous stance. The US statement firmly asserts that it will not idly witness settler violence, marking a notable shift in approach.

Meanwhile, Volker Türk, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, has expressed grave concerns about the situation in the West Bank, warning that the violence teeters on the brink of spiralling out of control, and citing Israel's use of heavy weaponry as a significant factor that amplifies tensions and the risks involved.

The ITUC deplors the continuing occupation of Palestine by Israel and re-affirms the policy adopted at the 4th ITUC World Congress in Copenhagen in favour of a two-state solution, in line with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

We urgently call for international action to put an end to the systematic oppression endured by Palestinian workers. The ongoing Israeli occupation, coupled with discriminatory policies and practices,

has created an imbalanced and precarious labour environment, leaving Palestinian workers vulnerable to exploitation, unemployment, and poverty.

In view of these circumstances, the ITUC urges the international community, governments, employers, and workers' organisations to unite and take immediate action in the following key areas:

Respect for International Labour Standards: All relevant parties must fully uphold and enforce international labour standards, including the core conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO), to ensure that Palestinian workers' rights are safeguarded, respected, and implemented without any form of discrimination.

Freedom of Association: Palestinian workers must be granted the right to freely form and join trade unions of their choosing, without interference, intimidation, or reprisals. Governments and employers must refrain from actions that hinder workers' freedom of association and collective bargaining rights.

End the Blockade and Occupation: The ITUC calls for an immediate end to the Israeli blockade and occupation, which have severely hindered the economic development of the Palestinian territories and impeded the creation of decent and sustainable employment opportunities for Palestinian workers.

Economic Justice and Fair Trade: The international community should actively support initiatives that promote economic justice and fair trade in Palestine, ensuring the establishment of decent work opportunities and sustainable development for Palestinian workers.

International Solidarity: Trade unions and civil society organisations worldwide must demonstrate unwavering solidarity with Palestinian workers by actively supporting their struggle for rights, raising awareness of their plight, and exerting pressure on governments and employers accountable for human rights abuses.

The ITUC reaffirms its commitment to collaborating closely with the PGFTU and other organisations dedicated to realising the rights and aspirations of Palestinian workers. Together, we will continue to leverage our collective voice and influence to advocate for justice, equality, and dignity for all workers, including those in Palestine.

The time for action is upon us. Let us unite in solidarity.