



EPSU Congress Resolution on the Palestine and Israel conflict

1. The EPSU Congress calls for all acts of violence to end and for a long-lasting peace to be negotiated. Congress expresses its deepest condolences and solidarity with all the people who have experienced loss and are suffering because of the current conflict between Israel and Palestine. As public service workers our role is to support people's access to basic human rights. We call on all actors to stand alongside us and uphold fundamental human rights for everyone.
2. The current conflict was triggered by the brutal and inhumane attack on 7 October 2023 by Hamas on civilians in Israel. This resulted in over one thousand Israeli people dead, many more wounded and over 200 being taken hostage. Nothing can justify this attack and we reiterate our calls for all hostages to be released immediately and unconditionally.
3. However, the military response of Israel to the attack has been without measure and must be condemned. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) report (May 8) over 35,000 people, the vast majority Palestinians, have been reported as killed in the Israel–Hamas war, among them hundreds of healthcare and humanitarian aid workers (including 179 employees of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)). There have been many more injuries and massive forced displacements of families. The attacks carried out in Gaza have crippled public services, destroying essential infrastructure, including hospitals and other healthcare facilities. Huge numbers of children, women and men have little or no access to water, food, electricity, shelter, healthcare and assistance. Public service workers are not able to carry out their missions. We are witnessing a major humanitarian crisis that is in clear violation of international law and our shared values. Hunger and destitution in Palestine is growing by the day and especially among children and the most vulnerable.
4. As the trade union movement has repeatedly called for, the primary goal of all parties and their supporters in the current conflict must be to end the fighting as soon as possible. For this reason, we believe that the international community must mobilise effectively to end the conflict, secure the release of the remaining hostages held by Hamas, lift the blockade of the Gaza Strip and ensure human rights for the Palestinian population. We call for the release of Palestine civilians detained in Israeli prisons for political reasons. We recall that the 1864 Geneva Convention and additional Protocols provide minimum protections, standards of humane treatment, and fundamental guarantees of respect to individuals who become victims of armed conflicts and that these rules must be respected.
5. We demand the full implementation of the six provisional measures called for by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 26 January 2024 in response to the case introduced by South Africa on 29 December 2023 accusing Israel of committing the crime of genocide in Gaza in violation of the 1948 Genocide Convention. The six ICJ measures order Israel – and by implication the international community – to use all means to prevent genocidal acts, including preventing and punishing incitement to genocide, ensuring aid and services reach Palestinians under siege in Gaza, and preserving evidence of crimes committed in Gaza. In line with the ICJ ruling all means of international pressure must be exerted against the Israeli Government to reinforce demands for peace. We support peaceful protests and condemn attempts to silence democratic mobilization.

6. We acknowledge that the Israeli Government's policies over the last decades - well-illustrated by the relentless expansion of Israeli illegal settlements in Palestinian territories - are an incontestable factor in the current dire situation. Congress reaffirms the long-standing demands for a negotiated agreement between Israel and Palestine that will result in a two-state solution leading to a viable Palestine alongside a secure Israel.
7. The European Union (EU) and the international community must put their full weight behind the implementation of the relevant United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolutions to achieve this solution. We call for a binding roadmap under the auspices of the UN to set clear targets and timelines to achieve progress, including to reverse all the illegal Israeli settlements and occupation of Palestinian territory. The ETUC should pressure the EU institutions to adopt a similar Action Plan.
8. Congress supports the ETUC call for regulatory measures that prevent EU legal entities from both importing products originating in illegal settlements in occupied territories and exporting to such territories. Consideration should be given to the use of trade and other sanctions, including the suspension of trade relations.. Congress also echoes calls for EU Member States and others that have not yet recognised Palestine as a State do so immediately. It is welcome that some EU Member States have indicated they will do so.
9. As trade unions committed to peace and social justice, we must play our part to support initiatives that can resolve the conflict and bring long-lasting peace to the region. Military expenditure in the Middle East increased by 9.0 per cent to \$200 billion in 2023. This was the highest annual growth rate in the region seen in the past decade. Public resources should be used to invest in reconstruction and to secure peace and social justice. It is the international community's responsibility to favour peaceful relations between countries rather than expand the defence industry, uphold commonly-agreed rules and to pursue diplomatic solutions to avoid war and armed conflict. It is imperative that we avoid a return to permanent and global conflicts. The EU must play its role.
10. The trade union movement condemns the escalation of antisemitism and Islamophobia around the world. We strongly oppose war, violence and all forms of discrimination. We will be vigilant to reject antisemitism, and anti-Muslim racism that may be exacerbated by the conflict. We oppose those who use these events to fuel divisions between peoples. We stand in solidarity with all workers and reiterate our calls for peace and justice for all. EPSU urges affiliates and other trade unions to support the PSI solidarity fund which will be used in the short term to support humanitarian efforts in Gaza, via internationally recognized humanitarian organisations and in the longer term, to support frontline workers to rebuild their lives and communities, helping to reestablish the three PSI affiliates in Gaza and the West Bank, organising in health services, municipalities and the public sector in general.