

12. The quest for a comprehensive peace between Israel and Palestine, based on the co-existence in conditions of security of two sovereign, independent and viable states, requires renewed international attention and support as a highest and urgent priority.

Congress asserts that the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 242, (1967), which recognises the 1967 borders, and 338 (1973), are fundamental to the achievement of a just and lasting peace. Congress recognises that action to address the plight of Palestinian refugees, also in light of the relevant UN Resolutions, is a key building block for peaceful and constructive relations between Israel and Palestine and their neighbours. Congress further calls for universal recognition of Israel's right to exist, next to an independent viable Palestinian state, acknowledging that this is essential to achieving a peaceful solution.

13. The continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank, the existence of illegal Israeli settlements there and their impacts on the lives of Palestinians including their access to water, along with the blockade of Gaza and the extremist policies of Hamas, impose severe constraints on the potential for Palestinian economic and social development and make many Palestinian workers dependent on precarious work in the settlements. Egypt's decision to impose heavy restrictions on its border with Gaza will worsen the already deep economic crisis affecting those living in Gaza.

14. Israel's December 2008 invasion of Gaza in response to rocket attacks, and the failure to respect the UN Security Council Resolution calling for a ceasefire were reckless and unacceptable, costing the lives of hundreds of innocent civilians. These events were yet another example of the deadly cycle of provocation and reaction, which only serves to deepen extremist attitudes and puts the prospect of a resolution of the conflict yet further from reach.

15. Recognising the ending of Israel's presence in Gaza as an important step towards resolving the conflict, Congress calls for the lifting of the blockade on Gaza in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1860 (2009) and for Israel to end the occupation of the West Bank and to remove all settlements. Congress recognises that economic relations with the settlements help to sustain their existence, in violation of international law.

16. While every country has the right to defend recognised borders and the lives and well-being of its population, the building by the Israeli government of a separation wall which intrudes substantially into Palestinian territory is a violation of international law which can only make peace and mutual coexistence harder to achieve. Congress calls for the wall to be removed, recognising that the mutual security of and respect between Israelis and Palestinians is central to the quest for peace. Congress calls for Israel and Syria to reach agreement on Israel's withdrawal from the Golan Heights, with the attendant guarantees for its security.

17. Congress urges both Israelis and Palestinians to renounce violence, commit to an immediate and lasting ceasefire and immediately engage in direct

negotiations as envisioned in the “Road Map” launched in 2002 by the US, Russia, the UN and the EU.

It recognises that agreement on the status of Jerusalem is central to resolving the conflict, and underlines the urgent and imperative need for the international community to support, in every way possible, the realisation of a peaceful and just solution.

18. Congress welcomes the landmark agreement between Histadrut and the PGFTU on the rights of Palestinian workers, which was finalised with the assistance of the ITUC in August 2008, and initiatives by Global Union Federations in their sectors to support cooperation in defence of workers’ rights. This agreement, and other actions to promote decent work and end discrimination, are crucial to building the basis for just and equitable economic development.

19. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian workers are unable to find employment under current conditions, causing widespread despair and disillusion, and Congress calls for urgent action to promote decent work opportunities for them. Congress commits the ITUC to continue to support the strengthening of cooperation between the Palestinian and Israeli trade union movements and calls upon the international community to support Palestinian economic reconstruction and development, including through the ILO Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection.