

International

A39

Conference deplores the Israeli military incursion into Gaza in December 2008 and the killing of over a thousand innocent civilians – around 1,300 Palestinians, including 400 children and thirteen Israelis, including 3 civilians and the 4,000 more injured as a result of three weeks of attacks on Gaza. Trade unionists and other workers in Gaza's vital public services have found themselves under attack and unable to undertake their jobs. Hospitals and schools have been destroyed or damaged, approximately half a million people are without access to running water, and 75% of Gaza is without electricity.

Conference notes that:

- a) The Israeli Government ignored UN Security Council Resolution 1860 (2009) which called for “an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire, leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.”
- b) The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, stated that Israeli military may have committed war crimes in Gaza.
- c) The United Nations Human Rights Council (12/01/2009) Resolution on the Grave Violations of Human Rights in the Occupied Palestine Territory called for an immediate ceasefire and condemned “the massive violations of Human Rights of the Palestinian people and the systematic destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure.”

Conference condemns any racist attacks on Jews and Muslims arising from Islamophobia or anti-Semitic activities – but recognises that to criticise the actions of the State of Israel is not to be anti-Semitic.

Conference is appalled that Israel's blockade of Gaza has now continued for over eighteen months preventing vital supplies from reaching the people of Gaza and is still continuing despite the destruction of large numbers of homes, work places and agricultural crops.

Conference noting that the International Committee of the Red Cross has accused Israel of failing to honour its obligation under international law to treat and evacuate injured civilians in Gaza, believes that the Israeli Government has acted and is acting in contravention of the IV Geneva Convention by imposing collective punishment on the people of Gaza.

We agree that Palestinian people have the right to defend themselves against such aggression, but do not support the indiscriminate firing of missiles into Israeli territory.

Conference condemns the statement of the Histadrut (the Israeli TUC) of 13th January 2009 which expressed support for the Israeli army attack on Gaza in a manner which was in accord with the position of the Government of Israel.

Essential to the long-term solution for peace in the Middle East is organised workers resistance to war and terror and PCS pledges to continue to build links with both Palestinian and Israeli workers organisations on the ground, stressing the need to take collective action and recognise their common interests to build unity and peace.

Conference welcomes the NEC statement following the invasion of Gaza.

Conference therefore instructs the NEC to:

- Reaffirm existing union policy in support of the Palestinian people's right to self determination with two independent states – Israel and Palestine, an end to the illegal occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, for the right of return of Palestinian refugees and for the immediate dismantling of the Apartheid Wall.
- Demand an end to Israel's military attacks and to lift its siege of Gaza.
- Demand that the British government unequivocally condemns the Israeli military aggression and ends arms sales to Israel noting the sale of more than £18.8 million worth of British arms to Israel in 2008, up from £7.5 million in 2007.
- Call for the immediate suspension of the EU-Israel Agreement providing preferential trade facilities to Israel.
- Call on the TUC to condemn the Histadrut statement and to raise this matter in the appropriate national and international forums of the trade union movement to put pressure on them to withdraw this statement.
- Encourage our members to boycott goods, and especially agricultural produce, produced in the illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories.
- Campaign for the British trade union movement to support calls for a consumer boycott of Israeli goods from Palestinian trade union and civil organisations.
- Encourage branches to affiliate to and support activities of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and other relevant organisations to which PCS is affiliated that have local and regional groups.

(covers E308-E326)

NEC
CLG Headquarters