



Statement on the Situation in Gaza

Unanimously adopted by the Unite Executive Council, January 2009.

Unite's EC deplores the fact that since Israel's military offensive in Gaza began on December 24th 2008 over nine hundred Palestinians have been killed of whom 292 are children (UN OCHA Report 12/01/2009). The Government of Israel has ignored the UN Security Council Resolution 1860 (2009) which "calls for an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire, leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza."

The UN high commissioner for human rights, Navi Pillay, the United Nations most senior human rights official, has stated that Israeli military may have committed war crimes in Gaza. The United Nations Human Rights Council (12/01/2009) Resolution on the Grave Violations of Human Rights in the Occupied Palestine Territory particularly due to the recent Israeli military attacks against the occupied Gaza Strip, calls for an immediate ceasefire and condemns "the massive violations of Human Rights of the Palestinian people and the systematic destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure." The UN Resolution also demands the immediate withdrawal of Israel's military forces from Gaza.

The EC is further appalled that Israel's blockade of Gaza has now continued for over eighteen months preventing vital supplies, including food and medicine, from reaching the people of Gaza.

The Israeli Government has acted in contravention of the IV Geneva Convention by imposing collective punishment on the people of Gaza. The World Health Organisation and other aid agencies have warned of a humanitarian crisis in Gaza and have called for an immediate ceasefire. Furthermore 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. The situation has led Amnesty International to call for an immediate humanitarian truce.

The Unite EC therefore resolves:

- To demand an end to Israel's military attacks and immediate withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and for Israel to lift its siege of Gaza.
- To demand a halt to the bombardment of Israeli targets by missiles fired from Gaza by Hamas.
- To demand that the British government unequivocally condemns the Israeli military aggression.
- To demand the British government 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.
- To call for the immediate suspension of the EU-Israel Agreement providing preferential trade facilities to Israel.
- To support demonstrations against Israel's attack on Gaza, and to encourage our members to attend.
- To encourage our members to boycott goods, and especially agricultural produce, produced in the illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories.
- To investigate Unite's holdings in companies engaged in building the Wall declared illegal by the International Court of Justice and to divest from them.
- To encourage branches to affiliate to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Stop the War Coalition.
- To encourage donations to TUC Gaza Appeal and other relevant initiatives such as Medical Aid for Palestinians and to agree a donation of £5000 to the TUC appeal.
- To agree to make a donation to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign to further the objectives of the campaign on Gaza of £1000.