



For a ceasefire in Israel and Palestine and for peace in the Middle East

Adopted at the Executive Committee meeting of 24-25 June 2024

In its Action Programme, adopted at its 15th statutory congress, ETUC promotes a peaceful resolution in Palestine, the respect of international law and demands the right of all peoples to self-determination, including that the EU considers the impact on workers when deploying sanctions.

Further, in its Action Programme, the ETUC reaffirmed the need for a negotiated agreement between Israel and Palestine that results in a lasting and peaceful “two-states” solution, representing solidarity, justice and the legitimate rights of both peoples to co-existence in security, independence and two sovereign viable states. The ETUC also called for enhanced cooperation between the Israelis and the Palestinians and their trade unions, as well as advocates “for regulatory measures that stop EU legal entities both importing products originated in illegal settlements and exporting to occupied territories, aiding or assisting such unlawful situations in conformity with EU Treaties and compliance with international law”.¹

With the failure of the latest truce talks and Netanyahu government’s ground invasion of Rafah by the Israeli army, the ETUC calls on the EU to take a clear stance against extreme right policies of belligerence, using all appropriate measures for immediate action to avoid further death and destruction in Rafah and across the Gaza Strip.

The ETUC condemns the terror attack by Hamas on 7 October 2023 and pays respect to all victims on both sides. The ETUC reiterates its existing policy and statements:² we call for an immediate and permanent cease-fire, the opening of borders for humanitarian aid and full respect for international law with the aim of a just and lasting peace.

The ETUC also calls for all hostages held by Hamas following the terror attack to be released unconditionally. Due judicial process, that conforms with international law, must be established for detained Palestinians. All workers, including Palestinian and migrant workers, who are currently trapped due to the conflict must be set free and able to return home. The ETUC denounces the violence by settlers against Palestinians and welcomes the decision of the EU to convene a meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council to assess compliance with the association agreement’s human rights obligations.

¹ [ETUC Action Programme 2023-2027. Together for a Fair Deal for Workers](#) – Par 4.7.8.

² Amongst others:

[Israel-Palestine: EU must play active role in de-escalation](#), 9 October 2023;

[Grave and worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza calls for more urgent EU response](#), 2 March 2024;

[New impulse for peace needed](#), 23 March 2024;

[Disappointing results of the EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting](#), 8 May 2024;

[ETUC appalled by harrowing developments in Rafah](#), 28 May 2024;

[Address to 112th Session of the International Labour Conference by the ETUC General Secretary](#), 10 June 2024.



The ETUC also stresses the importance of respecting and implementing the 26 January, 28 March and 24 May 2024 orders³ of the International Court of Justice: the response by Israel is both disproportionate and outside the limits of international law. The ETUC encourage Governments to consider what they can do unilaterally to prevent war crimes, including the introduction of sanctions, and calls on the EU to consider a military embargo.

The ETUC calls vigorously for peace negotiations, including a Peace Conference as outlined by EU-High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy Joseph Borrell last January, with the aim of recognising an independent Palestinian state side by side with Israel. A two-state solution between Israel and Palestine must be found, with co-existence and in conditions of security for two sovereign, independent and viable states, based on full implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions. ETUC calls on its affiliates to encourage their countries to actively engage in promoting a two-states solution and increasing aid efforts for the Gaza Strip. The ETUC encourages its affiliates to advocate in their own countries for the recognition of the State of Palestine. The ETUC also expresses its concern about further regional escalation, which must be prevented, avoiding it turning into a regional war.

The ETUC reiterates its deep concerns about the grave loss of lives and catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and its effect on civilians, in particular children and women. Full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian aid must urgently be ensured to the Palestinian civilian population, as well as the immediate and continuing provision of essential goods and services. Furthermore, the ETUC calls on the EU and its member states to increase support for humanitarian aid and to continue its investment in all agencies dealing with the humanitarian crisis, including UNRWA, so that it is addressed with the utmost urgency in Palestine and neighbouring countries.

Once peace prevails, the ETUC demands the rebuilding of Gaza based upon an ambitious financial and reconstruction plan with the participation of all, that also supports democratic institutions and processes. The ETUC warns against any macroeconomic conditionalities that could harm workers, trade unions' rights and public services in the reconstruction. This plan must have strong social conditionalities at its core to create the conditions for decent work with the respect of fundamental trade union and workers' rights. It must also strive for fair economic development to reverse mass unemployment and restore livelihoods. ETUC calls on the EU and its Member States to extensively commit, financially and politically, to invest in the rebuilding of Gaza and actively engage in the process.

Without compromising the humanitarian aid to vulnerable populations, financial support should foster reforms for a viable Palestinian state and steps to consolidate peace and reconciliation. Monitoring mechanisms should ensure aid effectively contributes to its intended objectives and it is not misused. The security and freedom of both states will depend on social justice and peace.

To support the fair economic development of the region, the ETUC calls on the EU to deploy the tools of its trade policy and support trade relations with both states, built on the respect of fundamental rights. The ETUC will support the ITUC in its work on projects that increase capacity of local trade unions and foster the dialogue among them, and on the UN database, as well as doing everything possible to eradicate islamophobia and antisemitism in workplaces across the EU. In order to ensure social dialogue in the region, it is necessary to guarantee full compliance with ILO international labour standards and to guarantee freedom of association and trade union freedoms in both

³ Case 192 - Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel).



States concerned. We also appeal to the implementation of ILO Recommendation – Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience, 2017 (No.205).

The ETUC commends the work of all those front line workers providing humanitarian support in this crisis and expresses its support in particular to aid workers and journalists risking their lives in Gaza for their work and crucial service to humanity and democracy.

The ETUC reiterates its condemnation of all human rights violations across the world and its support and solidarity to workers and trade unions in all conflict areas. The ETUC and its affiliates will continue to pursue social justice and respect for international law as the basis for universal and lasting peace.