

PTUC-BDS

The Palestinian Trade Union Coalition for BDS is the broadest and most representative alliance of Palestinian labor and professional unions. PTUC-BDS includes the following members:

General Union of Palestinian Workers

Federation of Independent Trade Unions

General Union of Palestinian Women

Palestinian Professional Associations (comprising the professional syndicates of Engineers, Physicians, Pharmacists, Agricultural Engineers, Lawyers, Dentists and Veterinarians)

General Union of Palestinian Teachers

General Union of Palestinian Peasants and Cooperatives

General Union of Palestinian Writers

Union of Palestinian Farmers

Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees (PFUPE)

Union of Public Employees in Palestine-Civil Sector

Palestinian Postal Workers Union

All of the trade union blocks that make up the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) including:

Central Office for the Workers Movement

Progressive Labor Union Front
Workers Unity block

Progressive Workers Block
Workers solidarity organization

Workers Struggle Block

Workers resistance block

Workers Liberation Front

Union of Palestinian Workers Struggle Committees

National Initiative Block

<http://www.bdsmovement.net/activemovements/trade-unions>

ptuc-bds@bdsmovement.net

Palestinian trade union movement stands in solidarity with European unions resisting austerity and struggling for social justice

- Our oppressors are united, so we too must be united in our struggle for justice!
- We salute trade unions working to implement practical BDS campaigns and sever ties with the Histadrut

Occupied Palestine, June 11 - Ahead of a summer of conferences and meetings to organise opposition to austerity, the Palestinian Trade Union Coalition for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (PTUC-BDS), a broad coalition comprising almost the entirety of the Palestinian trade union movement, including professional syndicates, is proud to stand in solidarity with trade unions resisting attacks on working conditions, cuts to public services and job losses.

The waves of strikes and demonstrations taking place and being planned across Europe and the defeat of pro-austerity governments in France and Greece are timely reminders of the importance and power of struggle, and of the fact that ordinary working people oppose the ideologically driven efforts to make them pay for a crisis caused by powerful political and financial elites.

Those same elites profit from and actively support Israel's system of occupation, colonisation and apartheid over the Palestinian people and its daily infringements of the basic rights and dignity of Palestinian workers. The agenda of perpetual war and relentless exploitation unites them. We, too, must be united in a joint quest for freedom, justice and equality. Palestinian trade unions and trade union activists stand in solidarity with your struggle. Your dignity is ours.

As trade unions and trade union activists gather, we also remember and express our gratitude for the inspiring solidarity shown to the Palestinian people by European trade unions in the form of BDS. We especially express our thanks to the Swedish Trade Union Federation (LO), which recently voted to adopt measures in the BDS framework.[1]

Trade union led boycotts and divestments against Israel have become the leading form of solidarity with Palestinian workers. BDS principles and tactics have been formally endorsed by national trade union federations in South Africa, UK, Scotland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, the Basque Country, Brazil and other countries across Latin America, in addition to scores of national and local unions.

As part of this impressively growing international labour support for BDS, which resembles a similar trend in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, trade unions around the world are taking steps to reconsider and even sever their ties with Histadrut, the colonial Israeli trade union entity that has

always played a key role in Israel's system of oppression over the Palestinian people. The Histadrut has issued statements in favour of both Israel's 22-day war of aggression in 2008-09 and the Israeli massacre of humanitarian activists on board the Freedom Flotilla in 2010.[2] The organisation participated in the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians during the 1948 Nakba, contributed to the construction of and holds financial interests in illegal Israeli settlements, has failed to take action to prevent systematic discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel, and has withheld funds owed to Palestinian workers.[3]

It is evident that a policy of "constructive engagement," as some international trade unionists have advocated, will provide further legitimacy and impunity to the Histadrut's complicity in Israel's violations of international law and Palestinian rights. The PTUC-BDS, a coalition comprised of the overwhelming majority of the Palestinian trade union movement, including all of the political blocs making up the PGFTU, is unequivocal in calling for a severing of links with the Histadrut as an effective and necessary form of solidarity with our struggle.

In parallel, trade unions are initiating concrete campaigns and actions, such as the heroic blockades of Israeli ships by dockworkers in South Africa, India, Sweden, Greece, Turkey and California, and the campaigns by the London region of the UK Rail, Maritime and Trans against Alstom, due to its complicity with an illegal occupation infrastructure project, and by the Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees (Fagforbundet) against Ahava and other companies complicit with Israeli violations of international law.[4] Trade union campaigns targeting corporate and state complicity with Israeli violations of international law are a vital and effective form of solidarity with the Palestinian struggle, and the PTUC-BDS looks forward to working alongside trade union colleagues around the world to develop further such activity and strengthen cross-movement struggles for human rights, social justice and dignified living everywhere.

The PTUC-BDS can be contacted at PTUC-BDS@bdsmovement.net

[1] <http://www.lo.se/home/lo/home.nsf/unidView/530140302842A8B8C1257A0A005DA7E4>

[2] http://www.labourstart.org/israel/Histadrut_on_Gaza.pdf
http://www.histadrut.org.il/index.php?page_id=1801

[3] For a full account of the role of the Histadrut, see:
Palestinian trade union movement applauds the Scottish Congress of Trade Unions (STUC) for heeding the Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS and calls on the STUC to sever links with the Histadrut
<http://www.bdsmovement.net/2011/tu-movement-stuc-6535#.T8YGg5IYvY8>

[4] In the wake of the murderous Israeli attack on the Freedom Flotilla in summer 2010, and in response to an appeal from the Palestinian trade union movement, the Swedish Dockworkers union blocked more than 500 containers weighing approximately 500 tons during a week-long blockade of exports to Israel and Israeli goods and dockworkers in Oakland, California respected a labour and community picket by refusing to unload an Israeli cargo ship for twenty-four hours. These actions followed those of the South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union which pioneered the boycott against Israeli maritime trade in February 2009 by refusing to offload a ship in Durban in protest of Israel's war of aggression on the Gaza Strip

For more on the RMT campaign against Alstom: <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2011/ptuc-salutes-rmt-london-alstom-8502>

For more on the Fagforbundet campaign against Ahava <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2012/vita-drops-ahava-8745#.T8Y4JIYvY8>