

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Resolution of Support for Prisoners' Strike Joins Growing Labor Solidarity for Palestinian Freedom

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The [Canadian Labour Congress](#), the national labor federation representing 3 million workers across Canada passed an Emergency Resolution at its 2017 convention in Toronto on 10 May in support of Palestinian prisoners' #DignityStrike. The text of the resolution follows:

Emergency Resolution

CLC Supports Palestinian Prisoners' Dignity Strike

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) will:

- a) Call on the Canadian Government to pressure Israel to stop violating international law by illegally detaining Palestinians and depriving them of their basic human, civil and political rights;
and
- b) Work with global union federations, affiliates and civil society organizations in Canada on campaigns in support of Palestinian prisoners.

BECAUSE More than 1600 Palestinian prisoners have been on a hunger strike since April 17, 2017; and

BECAUSE Key demands of the hunger strike include: end to the denial of family visits, the right to appropriate health care, the right to education in prison and an end to solitary confinement and "administrative detention"; and

BECAUSE The CLC supports the right of the Palestinian people to national self-determination and an end to the illegal Israeli occupation as the basis for a just peace in the region.

This important resolution follows on strong, growing international labor movement and trade union support for Palestinian prisoners and the Palestinian struggle for justice, self-determination and liberation.

On 12 May, the [Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions \(LO\)](#), which represents nearly one million workers in Norway, endorsed a **full international economic, cultural and academic boycott of Israel as a necessary means to support fundamental Palestinian rights.**

The Congress of LO unanimously supported some form of boycott of Israel, as 193 delegates voted for a full boycott and 117 voted for a limited boycott of Israeli settlements. The strong majority of the LO congress [embraced a full boycott of Israel](#), emphasizing the importance of meaningful international action in the face of impunity and apartheid. The LO vote escalated the existing position of the labor confederation in support of the boycott of settlement products.

This important action came as [1500 Palestinian prisoners](#) have been engaged in a hunger strike since 17 April for their basic human rights, including an end to the denial of family visits, proper medical treatment and health care, the right to pursue distance higher education, and an end to solitary confinement and administrative detention, imprisonment without charge or trial.

A number of trade unions and workers' organizations have been vocal in their support for the Palestinian prisoners. [26 European trade unions and labor organizations](#) endorsed a collective statement in support of the hunger strike:

“We believe that as trade unionists and conscious citizens of this world, we have duty and power to take a stand. We stand in solidarity with Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike in their demand for fair treatment and justice. We commit to working within our respective unions not to renew contracts with corporations like HP and G4S profiting from the imprisonment of Palestinians. In addition we call on the EU and European member states to end their complicity and hold Israel accountable for its gross violations of human rights,”[emphasized the unions](#), including labor organizations in Belgium, France, Ireland, Norway, the UK, Galicia, Basque Country, Valencia, Scotland, Ireland, Poland, the Netherlands, Catalonia, and Luxembourg.

Meanwhile, the National Union of Teachers in the UK has joined several other international labor unions in [being an HP-free zone](#). **Kevin Courtney**, general secretary with the National Union of Teachers, said in the Electronic Intifada that



“the NUT does not buy or use HP products or services as a gesture of solidarity with the Palestinian people.”

HP provides services and technologies to the Israeli military as well as the Israel Prison Service, and the [boycott of HP is a priority for BDS campaigns](#) in support of Palestinian prisoners.

These statements followed declarations by the [World Federation of Trade Unions](#), representing 92 million workers in 162 countries, and the [International Trade Union Confederation](#), representing 181 million workers in 163 countries, in support of the Palestinian prisoners' hunger strike.

The WFTU statement

“expresses its firm internationalist solidarity with the more than 6700 Palestinians, including 389 children and 56 women, currently imprisoned by the Israeli occupation forces.

We strongly denounce the imprisonment of the Palestinian people by Israel, the inhumane detention conditions and the acts of abuse like the violent beatings against our Palestinian brothers and sisters and we demand the immediate release of all Palestinian prisoners and the end of Israel's arrest campaigns, aggressiveness and occupation of the Palestinian territories.”

✘ [The WFTU also issued a statement](#) condemning the [Pizza Hut Israeli advertisement](#) – later pulled – mocking Palestinian hunger strikers, emphasizing again that

“The World Federation of Trade Unions and the international class oriented trade union movement stand on the side of the heroic Palestinian people and prisoners, express their solidarity and support to their fair struggle.”

[ITUC also expressed its solidarity](#) with

“Palestinian prisoners who have declared an indefinite hunger strike to protest against violations of human rights inside Israeli Prisons. We also support the ‘general strike for freedom and dignity’ held in solidarity with hunger striking prisoners and call for wider international solidarity...

We add our voice to the demands of the hunger striking Palestinian detainees calling for the lifting of restrictions on family visits, improved overall detention conditions and access to medical care, including easing restrictions on access to education materials and food, as well as the installation of telephones to communicate with their relatives. We also recall that under international humanitarian law, detainees from occupied territories must be detained in the occupied territory, not in the territory of the occupying power, as enshrined in the Fourth Geneva Convention.”

In South Africa, among the endorsers of the South African Campaign for Palestinian Political Prisoners is the [Congress of South African Trade Unions \(COSATU\)](#) as well as the South African Municipal Workers Union. **Sidubo Dlamini**, the President of COSATU, is [joining in the broad one-day](#) hunger strike [in South Africa](#) in support of Palestinian prisoners, alongside government officials, anti-apartheid struggle veterans and former political prisoners.

This support comes amid a [growing campaign in the international labor movement](#) in support of Palestinian rights, including an end to occupation and apartheid, full equality for all and Palestinian refugees' right to return to the homes and lands from which they were

expelled. Unions endorsing BDS include COSATU, CUT in Brazil, CSN in Quebec, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, the Irish Confederation of Trade Unions and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE) [in the United States](#). Unions in Scotland, Canada, the UK, Sweden, Belgium, the Basque Country, Uruguay and many other countries have also taken a stand in support of Palestinian rights and the campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions. Workers' struggles and popular movements like the [Landless Workers' Movement \(MST\) in Brazil](#) have been strong supporters of the Palestinian struggle – including that of the Palestinian prisoners – for many years.

Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network salutes all of the labor unions taking a stand with the Palestinian people and the Palestinian prisoners. We [echo the call of Palestinian trade unions](#):

“We also take this opportunity to call on trade unions yet to join the BDS movement to: implement boycotts of Israeli and international companies that are complicit with violations of Palestinian rights, divest trade union funds from companies and institutions complicit in Israel’s occupation, settler colonialism and apartheid, and apply pressure on governments to cut military and trade relations with Israel. We reiterate our call for a boycott of Histadrut, Israel’s general trade union, for its complicity with Israel’s violations of international law and its refusal to take a clear stand in support of comprehensive human rights for Palestinians.”

We urge all labor organizations and workers’ movements to express their solidarity and support for the Palestinian prisoners’ hunger strike, for the Palestinian people’s struggle for liberation and for the campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel. The majority of Palestinian prisoners are Palestinians of the popular classes: workers, from the villages, the refugee camps and the cities. The international workers’ movement is engaged in a battle confronting capitalist exploitation, oppression and austerity around the world. The Palestinian prisoners in their battle for dignity and freedom are on the front lines not only of the struggle for Palestinian freedom, but for social justice and human liberation in the world today.

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