

General Council Statement on Israel/Palestine

STUC Congress, Aviemore, 26 April 2017

In 2009 Congress agreed to support a campaign of Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions against Israel in support of the Palestinian people.

It did so following a General Council delegation to Israel/Palestine on which many unions were represented which concluded that, such was the level of oppression in Israel/Palestine that a campaign of Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions was justified as part of a global effort to alter the policies and actions of the Israeli state. This oppression includes the blockade of Gaza which contributes to a current unemployment rate of 70% and poverty rate of 60%, illegal settlements and severe restrictions of movement for Palestinians in the West Bank including through the construction of the apartheid wall.

As part of its 2009 Palestine report the General Council noted the failure of the Histadrut to recognise the occupation of the West Bank or condemn Israeli Army operations in Gaza. It did not recommend breaking links with Histadrut but supported a position of critical engagement. Subsequently however, as a consequence of the STUC's position on BDS and other issues relating to Palestine, Histadrut effectively broke links with the STUC. Since this point there have been no relations between the STUC and Histadrut. Whilst these continuing and significant differences between the respective organisations continue, there is no prospect that this situation will change.

The General Council commends those unions and activists who have undertaken legitimate campaigning activities in line with that policy and campaign.

It also recognises that on a number of occasions, campaigners undertaking activities legitimately within the parameters of the BDS campaign have been wrongly targeted with accusations of anti-Semitism and, in some cases, have been prosecuted for their actions.

There is a clear line between acts of anti-Semitism (which should be condemned and organised against without reservation) and actions of legitimate protest aimed against the policies of the Israeli state.

The General Council commits to the following:

- To encourage affiliates with BDS policies to support those of its members, through financial, legal and other support, who undertake activities within the bounds of the policy but who are subjected to unfounded accusation
- To encourage affiliates to actively work with the PGFTU and other groups representing Palestinian workers
- To update its Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions campaign pack in consultation with Scottish Palestine solidarity organisations, to reflect the current and worsening situation in Palestine
- To update its Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions campaign pack to reflect key boycott strategies and active BDS targets being undertaken internationally and identify actions which affiliates and supportive organisations can undertake