

THIS MONTH: A STATE OF FEAR; ERIK HELGESON; OCCUPATION UNEMPLOYMENT & RESISTANCE; WOMEN OF GAZA; ST ANDREWS DAY

OUR SEIZED FUNDS

Finally, the truth



Photo: The New York Times

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BUILDING EFFECTIVE SOLIDARITY

A STATE OF FEAR

Hussein Ezzedine
Scottish PSC TU Officer
Edinburgh Branch

We previously reported on the freezing of the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign bank account. Unity Trust Bank first placing a hold on the account on 24 June 2025, asking whether our organisation was affiliated in any way with **Palestine Action**; this was the day after the Home Secretary announced plans to proscribe Palestine Action.

We clarified that for a short period, our website had included a payment link allowing members of the public to donate to Palestine Action, with the bank seemingly satisfied, the block was lifted.

However, the freeze was reimposed two days later on 27 June. To this day, the account and several thousand pounds of campaign funds remain inaccessible. It is worth emphasising that the proscription of Palestine Action did not come into force until 5 July and is not retrospective.

Along with trade unions and other organisations that bank with Unity, we issued an open letter, signed by over 70 such organisations demanding the release of our funds.

However, we had long suspected the involvement of the state, and that this was part of the broader crackdown.

This has now been confirmed.

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OUR SEIZED FUNDS - A STATE OF FEAR



[Unity Trust Bank](#), majority-owned by trade unions, markets itself as an ethical bank committed to social justice and positive impact. Paul Nowak, General Secretary of the TUC, sits on the Unity Trust Bank board. We are grateful to Paul and to Simon Weller, ASLEF Assistant General Secretary and TUC General Council member, for facilitating a meeting with Unity Trust Bank CEO Colin Fyfe.

At that meeting, it was made clear that *“nobody in Unity Trust Bank can unfreeze the account.”* The authority to allow us access to our funds lies solely with the state, specifically the [National Crime Agency \(NCA\)](#).

A court order is required to freeze an account beyond 38 days. Ours has now been frozen for over five months, with no such order in place. This appears to be yet another example of state overreach and a disregard for what little legal protections remain.

No further questions have been asked since the initial inquiries made by the bank in June. SPSC is an organisation engaged in peaceful, non-violent advocacy, education and grassroots campaigning.

It is this work that the state fears.

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OUR SEIZED FUNDS - A STATE OF FEAR



The government is deploying the full power of the NCA; the lead agency tasked with combating the most serious organised crime, against those campaigning peacefully against the gravest of crimes; that of genocide.

Meanwhile, Scottish Procurators Fiscal, perhaps keen to avoid the embarrassment of trying to prosecute ludicrous cases under the terrorism act, have started offering warnings to activists. These include SPSC members facing charges; for wearing T-shirts stating: "Genocide in Palestine - Time to Take Action."

Letters being sent to alleged "terrorists," politely asking them to accept a warning, only underline the jaw-dropping absurdity of the Palestine Action proscription. Whilst on the very day these letters were dropping through doors, uniformed officers were spending the afternoon, on foot closely following myself and others at every turn around Edinburgh.

Distinctly weird, harassing behaviour, Police Scotland resources deployed to play a failed game of "hide and seek" on the streets, through shops, Christmas markets, art galleries and elsewhere!

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OUR SEIZED FUNDS - A STATE OF FEAR

SPSC has already adapted, ensuring the attack on our finances, though inconvenient, failed to land the damaging blow the authorities hoped for. Our campaigning continues undeterred; we want our money back, but the bigger fight is the one which is “coming, ready or not” to anyone else who dares to rock the boat. The farcical nature of this repression can be laughable, but being in the crosshairs of Counter Terrorism Policing and the NCA is no joke. The state’s desperation to silence dissent is real and dangerous.

An enlightened interconnected solidarity movement, making the link between genocide, inequality, destruction of the planet, and rampant worker exploitation is indeed a threat that fundamentally exposes and challenges the existing power structures.

Historically, we are granted freedom only up to the point where it threatens the status quo. Beyond that, dissent is either crushed or concessions are made only when pressure becomes overwhelming.

The trade union movement knows this better than most; having often been targeted for similar reasons in the past. Of course it stands to reason that if we are ineffective, then we can have all the so-called freedom we want. The measures currently being used against peaceful protestors may not currently be directed at unions, but normalised, their use wherever the state perceives a need will be much easier.

A relevant, assertive trade union movement is possible, and is desperately needed by workers in Scotland. An essential part of building that movement must be to oppose the current state repression.

Intimidation must not succeed.

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LISTEN TO ERIK HELGESON OF SDU

Hussein Ezzedine
Scottish PSC TU Officer
Edinburgh Branch

On 12 November 2025 we conducted a lengthy interview with Erik Helgeson Vice Chair, of the Swedish Dockworkers' Union (SDU). [View the fascinating and informative conversation in full here.](#) This is an important and inspirational piece of work which should be essential viewing for Scottish trade unionists. The interview will be summarised in next month's newsletter but it is too important to wait until then for us to promote to readers.

SDU is an independent trade union known for its democratic, member-run structure. The union's focus is on improving working conditions, job security, and limiting the use of temporary labour. The union has a history of industrial militancy and independence, often engaging in strikes and blockades to defend workers' rights whilst taking strong positions on both industrial & ethical issues.

Along with its unique member democracy, the SDU is also known for its internationalism. This has included taking action against the Pinochet dictatorship, the apartheid regime of South Africa and industrial action in support of dockers in the UK.

This tradition continued when members voted to block the handling of military shipments to and from Israel. In February this year, the Labour court ruled that the boycott could go ahead.

However, on the very same day as the court ruling, Erik was given notice of his dismissal. He was informed that this was due a "breach of security and disloyalty."

The fight for reinstatement continues - as does his unwavering commitment to internationalist values.

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PALESTINIAN WORKERS: BETWEEN THE HAMMER OF OCCUPATION AND THE ANVIL OF UNEMPLOYMENT

PNFTU Team

From the Occupied West Bank

Hazem Atta, a father of six, represents one of the many wounds inflicted upon the working class in the Tulkarem Governorate. He used to work in a plastics factory inside the occupied territories, earning a daily income ranging from £80-£90. May 16, 2022, was the day his life was turned upside down when he fell from a ladder at work, sustaining several injuries, including a severe ankle injury.

He was taken to a hospital in the occupied territories, where the medical staff confirmed he needed several operations, including an ankle replacement. However, in reality, they merely put his leg in a cast and discharged him without completing his treatment—a common occurrence for many Palestinian workers. Since then, he has received no treatment, despite being forced to pay nearly 10K ILS (over £2300) for medical reports, all to no avail.

“I have been suffering from severe pain in my body and in my heart because I can neither move nor support my family,” Hazem sighed. He added, “I am not asking for the impossible; all I ask is to be treated and compensated for my injuries.



The Palestine New Federation of Trade Unions

New Unions

BETWEEN THE HAMMER OF OCCUPATION & ANVIL OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Hazem lost his health, his movement is restricted, and he can no longer provide for his family. Although his case has been followed up by a lawyer accredited by The Palestinian New Federation of Trade Unions in the Israeli courts for three years, his case, like others involving Palestinian workers, is constantly being stalled. His is one of the many stories of suffering endured by the Palestinian working class under a racist occupation that views Palestinians as subjects with no rights, rather than human beings. Today, Hazem stands with his crippled ankle and pain, a testament to this racism, struggling with the demands of daily life and the judicial system's procrastination in restoring his right, for one reason only: because he is Palestinian.

A Shift in the Economic Landscape Post in the shadow of the ongoing genocide in Gaza, the economic and social landscape of the Palestinian occupied West Bank has faced an unprecedented onslaught.

Israel's decades-old illegal occupation and apartheid have already almost destroyed Palestinian economy, rendering it completely dependent on Israel's economy and jobs. After October 7, 2023, Israel has used this dependency and escalated dramatically collective punishment measures, revoking the work permits of nearly 248K workers. Tens of thousands suddenly found themselves without a source of income, in the absence of alternatives amid a near-total collapse of the local job market.

With economic prospects stalled, thousands of workers have been forced to take dangerous routes, sneaking across the Green Line and the Apartheid Wall in search of a livelihood. Despite knowing the inherent dangers—including the risk of death or arrest—their overwhelming need has driven them to risk their lives. Some sleep in the mountains or in construction sites, facing daily pursuit and humiliation, a scene that reflects the compounded tragedy Palestinian workers have endured for decades.



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New Unions

BETWEEN THE HAMMER OF OCCUPATION & ANVIL OF UNEMPLOYMENT

According to statistics, 44 Palestinian workers from the West Bank have been killed by Israeli military since October 2023, and over 32,000 have been arrested while attempting to reach their workplaces or directly from construction sites. Currently, about 40,000 workers are working across the Green Line (inside pre-1967 Israel) without permits under inhumane conditions in addition to about 30,000 in West Bank settlements. Conversely, the Palestinian economy in the West Bank is experiencing a state of economic and social paralysis.

Against the backdrop of these policies, the occupation announced the establishment of two new central prisons, one between Haifa and Nazareth and the other between Ramallah and Jerusalem, designated specifically for detaining Palestinian workers—a move that is part of a "declared war on the Palestinian working class."

Calls for Justice and Economic Alternatives

Mohammad Balidi, General - Secretary of the Palestinian New Federation of Trade Unions (New Unions), affirmed that what is happening is "collective punishment that amounts to a war crime," explaining that 235,000 workers have been living without income for nearly two years. He stressed that the return of workers to their workplaces is the "only short-term solution," while the long term requires more than anything the end of the occupation, Israel's regime of apartheid, and a true de-colonization process.

In the meanwhile, alternative developmental policies focused on empowering local industries and employing youth in productive projects can only help create an economy of *sumoud* ("resilience") to withstand the onslaught of Israel's policies. He added that the PA government is unable to provide real alternatives, as its programs cover no more than 7% of the affected workforce, while the number of unemployed Palestinians has exceeded half a million, equivalent to more than a third of the labour force.



BETWEEN THE HAMMER OF OCCUPATION & ANVIL OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Economic and Political Dimensions

Economic researcher Ismat Qazmaz from the MAS Institute for Research confirms that the Israeli view of its relationship with Palestinian workers changed after the start of the genocide in Gaza. Extreme right-wing factions are now imposing policies aimed at "complete severing of ties," despite Israeli institutions acknowledging their continuous need for Palestinian labour to be exploited with low salaries and no rights. Qazmaz adds that more than half of the workers who lost their jobs two years ago resorted to temporary and negative solutions such as selling assets, borrowing, or spending savings, leading to an unprecedented deterioration in the financial situation of Palestinian families.

Attacks on workers continue, the latest being the shooting of two workers near the Apartheid Wall in Jerusalem in October 2025. Settlers are now chasing and detaining Palestinian workers and handing them over to the police. This showcases not only the depth of racism and the spread of hatred within Israeli society but also how the settler militias are a central part of the state's policies of ethnic cleansing, apartheid, and colonisation.

The struggle of the Palestinian working class is not only a labour issue, it is part of the Palestinian struggle for national liberation and comprehensive justice. Until justice, freedom and equality for all Palestinians, including the right of return and reparations, the Palestinian workers in the West Bank will remain between the hammer of the siege Israel imposes on the West Bank, and the anvil of need, fighting poverty, and pursuing their livelihood on paths fraught with death.

As Palestinian unions and working class we know that dignity is not given nor bought, but seized with patience and persistence in the struggle.



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BETWEEN THE HAMMER OF OCCUPATION & ANVIL OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Our Demands to Global Labour Unions

Israeli genocide and apartheid, including the oppression and exploitation of Palestinian workers, are a local experiment for a global policy of death, destruction and annihilation. We have to stand together to stop it now!

Workers across the globe have a key role to play and as the Palestine New Federation of Trade Unions , we call on labour unions worldwide to:

1. Join the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement as a ethical and legal duty.
2. Refuse to deal with any institutions complicit with the Israeli apartheid system.
3. Contribute to imposing a military and energy embargo by preventing the passage of ships carrying military or dual-use material as well as cargo used to aid and assist its ongoing genocide and illegal occupation, to Israel.
4. Pressure governments to impose comprehensive economic and military sanctions on the Israeli regime.
5. Demand the prosecution of those responsible for war crimes, apartheid and other crimes against humanity, and genocide before the International Criminal Court.



The Palestine New Federation of Trade Unions

New Unions

BETWEEN THE HAMMER OF OCCUPATION & ANVIL OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Hope Cannot Be vanished

Despite the pain and destruction, the hope for freedom cannot be vanished.

The Palestinian people are not fighting merely for survival but for their rights and human dignity itself.

Gaza has become a measure of the world's conscience and a true test of the values claimed by modern civilisation. Whoever stands with Palestine today is standing with justice against annihilation, with humanity against tyranny, and with life against death.



AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF WOMEN IN GAZA



Kate Ramsden

Unison

STUC Women's Committee

The recent STUC Women's Conference recognised the [disproportionate impact that the conflict and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza has had on women and children.](#)

Delegates condemned all violence against civilians and pledged to lobby the Scottish and UK governments to promote sustainable peace in Gaza based on human rights and international law.

We have watched as Israel commits war crime after war crime against innocent civilians. Israel has massacred almost 70,000 Palestinians, around 70% of them women and children, first through bombardment, then through starvation as an act of war and expressly forbidden under international law. We have witnessed the targeting of health care staff and journalists, the destruction of medical facilities, schools and other essential infrastructure – more war crimes

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AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF WOMEN IN GAZA

STUC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE 2025



“Women build bridges, not borders”

And we have joined with many of the population in marches and demonstrations, demanding an end to the genocide, an end to Israel's impunity and an end to our country's arms trade with Israel.

And we know that in war, women and children suffer the most. It's not only the deaths – though God knows, the loss of so many mothers, grandmothers, daughters and sons is a pain hard to bear. But it's also the impact on women of constant displacement, a lack of food and basic medicines and the lack of access to basic necessities like sanitary wear for the 690,000 menstruating women and girls in Gaza.

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AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF WOMEN IN GAZA

At the height of Israel's assault on Gaza, the lack of maternity provision meant that around 130 women daily were forced to give birth without any medical care putting at risk their lives and the lives of their babies.

Add this to women's increased risk of sexual violence and exploitation during wars and conflicts, the victims often children, and you can see how important it is that we, in the West, amplify the voices and experiences of women and children in Gaza.

Although there is a fragile ceasefire, which we welcome, we still see Israel withholding humanitarian aid, so the hardship has not yet eased dramatically for the women in Gaza. And now they are returning to homes bombed to rubble; their possessions dust, their lives destroyed.

It is hard to walk a mile in the shoes of the women of Gaza but as sisters we must do so in solidarity with them. We must be their voices.

I will finish with a quote from one of my Facebook friends from Gaza. A man but writing powerfully about the women of Gaza, describing both the vulnerability and also the strength that women hold.



"Displacement leaves deep scars on the women of Gaza... Between the loss of safety, the absence of shelter, and the worsening of basic needs, women bear the heaviest burden in painful silence. Every displacement is not just a move from one place to another, but the tearing away of a piece of the soul... Today, the women of Gaza are the last line of defence for what remains of life amid the rubble."

We must be a voice for the women and children of Gaza.

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ST ANDREW'S DAY ANTI RACISM MARCH & RALLY



Hussein Ezzedine
Scottish PSC TU Officer
Edinburgh Branch

On November 29, 2025, Glasgow played host to the annual STUC St. Andrew's Day Anti-Racism and Anti-Fascism March and Rally. Always a significant date in the calendar, marking the ongoing struggle against discrimination, hate, and injustice. The event brought together trade unions, community organisations, activists, and individuals from across the country, united under the banner of solidarity and resistance to the far-right ideologies which we see gaining ground in Scotland.

This year, the theme was "Stand Up, Speak Out: Unite Against Racism!"

Among those marching was the First Minister John Swinney who was joined by Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar at the rally that followed.

The need for unity was repeatedly stressed, however unity cannot be built by being disingenuous. Mr Sarwar told us that countering racism and prejudice was above party politics; this whilst leading a genocidal party which thinks the way to beat the far right, is to become the far right. He was rightly heckled as chants of "**FREE FREE Palestine...**" reverberated around the hall.

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ST ANDREW'S DAY ANTI RACISM MARCH & RALLY

STAND UP, SPEAK OUT

We must oppose every form of racism in Scotland, including anti-Palestinian racism, and the growing hostility toward muslims, migrants and people of colour. This hate is fuelled and given legitimacy by the UK government which continues to give unwavering support to genocidal, apartheid Israel.



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UNITE AGAINST ZIONISM

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STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINIAN WORKERS

The list of signatories who have agreed to have their names made public has now been published. In recognition of the racist nature of Zionism, this was done to coincide with the STUC St Andrews Day anti racism march and rally on 29 November 2025.

SIGN IN SOLIDARITY

Hussein Ezzedine

Scottish PSC Trade Union Officer
Edinburgh Branch

Earlier this year the SPSC Trade Union working group drafted a Statement of Solidarity with Palestinian Workers. This statement expresses our unwavering solidarity with our comrades in Palestine.

Signatories understand that the Palestinian struggle is part of a broader struggle for freedom, equality and justice, and that the liberation of oppressed people is inextricably linked to the struggles of workers in Scotland and elsewhere.

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STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINIAN WORKERS

Signatory Organisations:

Iver Bimson, on behalf of RMT
John Dennis, Dumfries, on behalf of Dumfries & Galloway TU Council
Derek Durkin, Edinburgh, on behalf of Trade Unions In Communities
Hussein Ezzedine, Edinburgh, on behalf of ASLEF Edinburgh No1 Branch
Sylvia Haughney, Falkirk, on behalf of UNISON
Ruth Horsfall, Edinburgh, on behalf of PCS Scottish Government Group
Alicia Kopiej, Kirkcaldy, on behalf of Unite Community Tayside and Fife
Babs Macgregor, Glasgow, on behalf of workers.coop
Robert Wicksted, Edinburgh, on behalf of ASLEF Edinburgh No2 Branch
Esmond Sage, Aberdeen, on behalf of UNISON Aberdeen City branch

Signatories in a personal capacity:

Tony Adams, Glasgow EIS and NUJ
Sarah Alam, Glasgow, Unite the Union
Charlie Allanson-Oddy, Edinburgh, Unite and IWW
Jamie Bolland, Glasgow, Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)
Chr Brennan, Shotts, Unite
Maria Brichs, Edinburgh, Unison
Laurie Byrne Rains, Dundee, Unite
David Cannon, London, Unite the Union
Tony-Peter Carter, Fraserburgh, Unison
Carole Clohesy, Huntly, NEU
Maggie Chapman, Aberdeen, Unite the Union
Allan Connal, Cumbernauld, GMB
Andy Crichton, Ladybank, Unite Community
Kimberley Davidson, Innerleithen, Unison
Jane Davidson, Edinburgh, Unison
Emma Donnelly, Glasgow, Unite Hospitality Glasgow
CarolAnne Duncan, Glasgow, EIS
Derek Durkin, Edinburgh, Unite
Erin Farley, Dundee, Unison
David Hailey, Motherwell, RMT & North Lanarkshire Trade Union Council
Tony Hickie, Aberdeen, PCSU (retired)
Naomi Junnor, Glasgow, Unison
Theresa Keenan, Glasgow, Unite the Union
Aiki Kalliopi Chiotaki, Edinburgh, Unison

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STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINIAN WORKERS

Stuart Graham, Glasgow, Unison
Lindsay Giffen, Campbeltown, Unison
Peter Gunn, Glasgow, Retired
Sharon Iddir, Dunfermline, EIS
Susan Kelly, Edinburgh, Unite the Union
David Kirkwood, Wishaw, UNITE
Louise Kowalska, Edinburgh, PCS Scottish Government Group
John Robertson, Glasgow, Unison
James Lafferty, Motherwell, ASLEF
Helen Leaver, Edinburgh, Retired
Jim Lister, Glasgow, Unite the Union
James McCabe, Bo'ness, Unison NHS Retired member.
Tara McCarthy, Prestonpans, Unison
Deborah MacFadyen, Glasgow, Unison
David MacFadyen, Glasgow, Unison
Rene McDonald, Glasgow, NUJ
Eve Macdonald, Edinburgh, Accord
Katherine McGowan, Dingwall, Unison
Sara McGregor, Newburgh, Unison
Mhairi McKean, Glasgow, Unison and Unite
John McKenzie, Duns, FBU
Craig Maclean, Edinburgh, NUJ
Kathie Mclean Toremar, Dunoon, Unison
Jeff McDermott, St Andrews, Unison
Donald McKenzie, Edinburgh, Unison
James McSporran, Lochgilphead, RCN
Chris Main, St Andrews, Unite Retired Members
Jim Malone, Dundee, FBU
Alan Marshall, Glasgow, Unite West of Scotland Community Branch
Juliet Molteno, Alva, Unison
Peter Moonie, Bonnyrigg, UNISON
Douglas Murdoch, Dunbar, Unite the Union unemployed member
Aisa Nebreda, Ardrishaig, Unison
Gabriel Neil, Dunfermline, PCS
Lia Nogueira, Peterhead, Unison
Annie Ogletree, Edinburgh, Unison Retired member
Charley O'Hear, Paisley, Unison
Alec Ohnstad, Lochgilphead, NASUWT
Peter Olech, Edinburgh, Unite Edinburgh Community

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Morven Ovenstone-Jones, Fife, SSTA
W M Oswald, Glasgow, Unite the Union
Alex Pandolfo, Morecambe, UCU retired members
John Pinto, Edinburgh, UCU
Mark Rivers, Macduff, BECTU (Prospect)
Anna Robertson, Aberdeen, PCS
Kevin Robertson, Falkirk, Unite the Union
Martin James Rushford, Kilmarnock, Unison
Damian Sefton, Edinburgh, UNISON
Eileen Simpson, Edinburgh, EIS
Stephen Smellie, Hamilton, Unison
Fiona Stoddart, Glasgow, Unite
Iain Trotter, Dumfries, RMT
Lesedi Vine, Edinburgh, Unite the Union
Anne Marie Woods, Belfast, NEU
Jurgen Wolf, Cairnbaan, retired member
Fiona Stoddart, Glasgow, Unite
Iain Trotter, Dumfries, RMT
Lesedi Vine, Edinburgh, Unite the Union
Anne Marie Woods, Belfast, NEU
Jurgen Wolf, Cairnbaan, retired member
Marion Young, Motherwell, TSSA retired

The statement remains open for you to [SIGN NOW](#)

Sign Statement of Solidarity



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SPSC CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS



The Jewish National Fund (JNF) has served as a global fundraiser for Israeli ethnic cleansing, occupation in Palestine since its inception. Despite its role in institutionalised racism and apartheid, the JNF enjoys charitable status in over 50 countries, including Scotland, which comes with financial privileges such as tax relief.

Canada led the way in revoking the JNF charity status in the country, and we are calling on the **Scottish regulator** (OSCR) to do the same! In 2012, the **Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) resolved to endorse the Stop the JNF Campaign**.

WRITE TO OSCR

As trade unionists in Scotland, we must show unwavering solidarity with our Palestinian colleagues in their struggle for freedom, equality and justice, for the liberation of all oppressed peoples are inextricably linked workers' struggles in Scotland and around the world.

Our **Statement of Solidarity with Palestinian Workers** has now been published on the website; signatures can still be added.

SIGN THE STATEMENT

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GET IN TOUCH

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