

THE PALESTINIAN STRUGGLE: A WORKERS ISSUE

Scottish PSC Trade Union Network Newsletter | February 2026

THIS MONTH: AFZ - SALIM SUHEIL SALMAN - TESCO WORKER WIN - DAYSCHOOL INVITE - THE BIG GIVE AWAY - WORKPLACE DAY OF ACTION



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EDITORIAL: SCOTLAND'S APARTHEID FREE ZONES FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION

On 12 January 2026, the [Apartheid Free Zone \(AFZ\) Scotland](#) interactive map was launched, marking a significant step forward for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in Scotland. The map already highlights over 100 organisations and small businesses across the country that have answered the BDS call and are boycotting Israel amid the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

The race is now on to expand this initiative, particularly among civil society organisations and trade unions across Scotland – to translate long-standing BDS policy commitments into concrete action.

Part of the international Apartheid Free Zones initiative, AFZ brings together shops, cafés, small businesses, community organisations and trade unions that commit to cutting ties with BDS priority targets and divesting from companies identified by authoritative UN and civil society research groups.

By linking these spaces locally, nationally and internationally, the initiative sends a clear message to the Palestinian people: they are not alone in their struggle for freedom, justice and equality. This is a movement built from the bottom up, with the ultimate aim of making all of Scotland an Apartheid Free Zone.

The Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) has endorsed the AFZ initiative, but the launch of the map raises the stakes. It provides both momentum and an opportunity to turn words into action. Despite overwhelming union support for BDS, only one union branch; ASLEF Edinburgh No.1 appears on the map so far.

The BDS movement, launched in 2005 by a coalition of over 170 Palestinian civil society organisations, draws inspiration from the international boycott of apartheid South Africa.

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Its aim is to apply non-violent pressure on Israel until it complies with international law and respects Palestinian rights.

The AFZ Scotland map already spans communities from a small shop in Ullapool to a B&B in Pitlochry. Its growth now depends on public engagement and organisational commitment. Every union branch, community group and workplace that joins strengthens a collective, anti-racist movement for justice.

While the Scottish Government continues to stall despite fine words, Scotland's civil society can take matters into our own hands and act. The Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign is writing directly to the STUC, all trade unions and trades councils, inviting them to join the AFZ campaign and be added to the map.

The groundwork has been done. In recent years, a number of motions supporting BDS have been passed by individual unions and the STUC. Including those explicitly supporting Apartheid Free Zones (see below).

The argument has been won. Trade unions should be the lowest of low-hanging-fruit.

The question now is simple: when will you sign up?

**apartheid
free zones**
SCOTLAND



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SCOTLAND'S APARTHEID FREE ZONES: FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION

MOTION 110 LASTING PEACE IN PALESTINE (Passed at STUC Congress April 2025)

That this Congress recognises that the current situation in Gaza is not a new occurrence, but a continuation of decades of human rights abuses.

Congress welcomes the most recent ceasefire negotiation and agreement and notes the role that trade unions have played in showing international solidarity and calling on politicians to take action.

This Congress notes that a just and permanent peace, consistent with international law, must include the right to collective self-determination of the Palestinian people as well as a resolution on the right to return.

Congress acknowledges however, that this is a is still a long way away and more work is needed to achieve peace and prosperity for the Palestinian people.

Therefore, this Congress commits to:

- encourage unions to affiliate to the Scottish Palestinian Solidarity Campaign;
- write to the Israeli Ambassador calling for an end to the genocide of the Palestinian people;
- **Step up Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaigning, encouraging all affiliates to support and promote BDS amongst members, including through the Apartheid Free Zones (AFZ) campaign;**

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SCOTLAND'S APARTHEID FREE ZONES: FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION

- continue the fight against all forms of discrimination;
- write to the Scottish First Minister and UK Prime Minister calling for an end to UK and Scottish government potential complicity in Israeli war crimes and crimes against humanity, including an end to all arms sales;
- promote and support a series of workplace days of action in support of the Palestinian people; and
- support workers who refuse to build, handle and transport weapons destined for Israel.”

MOTION 2 GAZA GENOCIDE

(Carried at STUC Black Workers Conference 2024)

That this Conference notes that amid the ongoing genocide in Gaza there is a call from Palestinian Trade Unions, urging us to take action and to step up our solidarity.

Conference recognises the latest horrors as the continuation of decades of crimes, including belligerent occupation, settler colonialism and apartheid. Actions enabled, facilitated and given cover by parts of the international community and even some of our politicians.

The best means of opposition remains the boycott, divestment, sanctions (BDS) campaign, the Palestinian led movement for freedom, justice and equality. BDS is now effectively challenging international support for Israel, whilst Apartheid Free Zones allow those who have pledged support for BDS to make a public declaration, an important statement that will help transform our local communities into spaces of solidarity with the Palestinian struggle.

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Conference therefore calls on the STUC Black Workers' Committee to:

- write to the Israeli Ambassador calling for an end to the genocide of the Palestinian people;
- write to the Scottish First Minister and UK Prime Minister calling for an end to UK and Scottish Government complicity in Israeli war crimes and crimes against humanity, including an end to all arms sales.

Further, the STUC Black Workers' Committee to work with the STUC General Council and affiliates to resolve to take practical actions to show solidarity, including:

- **pledging to step up the BDS campaign and encouraging support for the Apartheid Free Zones initiative;**
- taking steps to ensure that we are not complicit in supporting and sustaining Israeli oppression, including by campaigning to divest any Trade Union funds (inclusive of pension investments) from companies complicit in Israel's occupation and human rights violations;
- supporting workers who refuse to build, handle and transport weapons destined for Israel; and
- encourage affiliated unions, branches and individuals to support the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign
- Showing solidarity with workers who are being prevented by their employer from fundraising in the workplace for humanitarian charities such as Medical Aid for Palestinians.

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THE ARREST OF SALIM SUHEIL SALMAN

A New Year rife with repression reminds us that international solidarity is more urgent than ever

PNFTU Team

From the Occupied West Bank

At 3:00 AM on January 1 2026, while the world was celebrating a fresh start, Israeli military forces stormed the home of Salim, a journalist and labor activist in Tulkarm. His family had hoped for a year of peace amidst the ongoing devastation in Gaza and worsening apartheid conditions across historic Palestine, but the dawn brought only fear.



The soldiers entered with extreme violence. They locked Salim's wife and their two young children, a three-year-old boy and a one year old daughter, in a single room, preventing them from seeing what was happening. In another part of the house, Salim was being beaten. He wasn't even allowed a moment to comfort his children or say goodbye.

Salim is well-known as a freelance journalist and a defender of Palestinian workers' rights



The Palestine New Federation of Trade Unions

THE ARREST OF SALIM SUHEIL SALMAN

He dedicated his life to documenting the abuse, exploitation, and safety violations workers face, crimes that under Israeli apartheid always go unpunished as they are the rule. Because he chose to speak for the oppressed, he became a target. As a member of the New Unions, he helped organizing labour struggles, developing the communications of the New Unions. To prevent this struggle to be heard and seen, he got arrested.

On that freezing, rainy night, Salim was handcuffed and blindfolded. The soldiers dragged him out into the storm without a coat or proper shoes, shouting and pushing him as if they were celebrating a "victory" rather than arresting a father.

For four days, his family lived in agonizing silence, knowing nothing of his fate. They eventually learned he was being held at the Manashe detention center in the Salem military camp, a facility known for its harsh conditions and lack of legal protections. It is one of the prisons Israel has established after the start of the genocide in Gaza to account for the huge increase of Palestinian prisoners.

On January 8, 2026, Salim finally was given a court hearing. It was not a trial for justice, but a formality. His detention was extended, he was given a six-month administrative detention order. This means he is held without charge, without trial, and without any way to defend himself. As of December 2025, 9300 Palestinians have been held in Israeli prisons, almost half of them as "administrative detainees", held without trial or charge. Salim is now one of them.



THE ARREST OF SALIM SUHEIL SALMAN

Salim's arrest is part of Israel's wider campaign to silence journalists and activists who expose the truth. Despite the mistreatment, his family says he remains firm in his principles. To them, and to everyone who knows his work, Salim is a symbol of courage, a man who refused to stop speaking the truth to power, no matter the cost.

As a result of Israel's systematic attack on journalists and press freedom, as of December 2025 42 journalists were lingering in Israeli prisons. Since the start of the genocide in Gaza nearly 300 journalists and media workers have been killed by Israel. According to Reporters Without Borders, Israel killed more journalists in 2025 than any other country.

The systematic targeting of journalists is an essential part of Israeli policies of apartheid, genocide and illegal occupation, intended to silence the truth and to eliminate the Palestinian narrative and people.

Yet, mainstream media typically stays silent, or worse, repeats Israeli propaganda. Former senior UN human rights official Craig Mokhiber has condemned the role mainstream Western media has played in enabling Israel's genocide, saying: "The repeated non-critical recitation of false, dehumanizing Israeli propaganda by western media is not sloppy journalism – it is war propaganda and incitement to genocide for which they must be held accountable as their media counterparts were in the Nuremberg and Rwanda tribunals."



THE ARREST OF SALIM SUHEIL SALMAN

While Palestinian trade unionists and journalists are facing arrest and detention for their courageous work, it is the responsibility of people across the world to take action and:

Ensure the reality of Israeli crimes is not being silenced nor normalised and the Palestinian struggle continues to inspire **solidarity and action globally**;

Challenge complicit media that parrots Israeli propaganda, protesting their support for genocide, apartheid and illegal occupation and holding those responsible accountable. At the very minimum journalists have to adhere to the 7 Ethical and Professional Journalistic Principles compiled by the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate;

Work with unions including journalist unions to build boycott, divestment and sanctions campaigns and ensure Israeli propaganda does not pass.



LIBERATION: ONE BDS VICTORY AT A TIME

*Tesco worker reinstated following protest action
across Britain and Ireland*



Gabi Nogueira
Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign
Edinburgh Branch

Last month, we published an article about a Tesco worker who had been suspended, under disciplinary action, for taking a principled solitary stance and refusing to handle Israeli produce in Newcastle, County Down.

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LIBERATION: ONE BDS VICTORY AT A TIME

BDS groups in Ireland then issued a call for solidarity, echoing a powerful moment in Irish history, when Dunne Stores worker Mary Manning refused to deal apartheid South Africa grapefruits, making international headlines and leading to an Irish ban on fruit and vegetables imports from South Africa.

A “National Day of Action Against Tesco” was organised and joined by thousands of activists across Ireland and Britain, taking a stand for justice, workers’ rights and solidarity. After two months of campaigning, the worker – who wishes to remain anonymous – has been reinstated by the supermarket giant with all disciplinary actions dropped. The worker has accepted a role where they will not be expected to handle illegal Israeli products.

In a statement, the campaign announced: “Tesco insists that these goods are legally sourced, a position we vehemently oppose. These products, often labelled misleadingly, help to fund Israel's ongoing genocide in Palestine. We want to make it clear to other workers considering action – union support exists.”

In 2021, retail workers' union USDAW passed a BDS proposition recommending they “support and protect, with the full force of [the] Union, any member who wishes on moral grounds to refuse to handle goods originating from the currently occupied lands of Palestine by Israel.”

We echo the [campaign's statement](#) and call on USDAW to continue representing its members in accordance with this policy: a precedent has now been set.

In a statement of their own, the worker said: “This case has not been all about me. It's about every worker with a conscience. We can all make a stand for humanity, in our own way.”

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CALL TO ACTION: WORKERS DAYSCHOOL FOR PALESTINE

Hussein Ezzedine
Scottish PSC TU Officer
Edinburgh Branch

Late last year, we began planning an all-day workers' event bringing together activists committed to building effective, long-term solidarity in the workplace. We're pleased to now confirm the date and venue:

Saturday, 11 April
Augustine United Church, Edinburgh

The Dayschool will focus on **upskilling Palestine organisers**, equipping trade union activists with practical tools for **workplace organising, campaign planning**, and sustained **worker-to-worker solidarity**.

Workshops will draw together best practice and be led by organisers with expertise. International activists will share lessons from solidarity campaigns, and **grassroots Palestinian trade unionists** will contribute directly.

Palestinian trade unions have been clear in their call: they do not need pity or symbolic statements. They are asking for **concrete measures that materially challenge Israel's system of oppression**. This Dayschool is about building the capacity to deliver exactly that.

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CALL TO ACTION: WORKERS DAYSCHOOL FOR PALESTINE: YOUR INVITE

This day school is for workers and activists who are interested in workplace and union organising for Palestine. The purpose is to:

- develop skills and knowledge to support workplace organising and campaigns
- learn from experienced organisers in different sectors in Scotland and from organisers of successful workplace actions on Palestine in different countries,
- create a forum to share experiences and connect workers from across Scotland who are committed to grassroots, workplace organising on Palestine.

The day school will be a mixture of workshops and training, panels and discussion. This day school does not require any pre-existing experience with union organising, but is most suited to those who can put what they learn into practice, either in a current workplace or as activists involved in a worker-focused campaign.

To apply for a place now - [Get in touch](#)

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CALL TO ACTION: WORKERS DAYSCHOOL FOR PALESTINE

We have an opportunity to do something different, to bring together trade unionists and activists from a number of organisations with a shared goal: **to step up practical solidarity**.

We are now:

- Seeking comrades who want to **help organise and promote** the day
- Inviting **trade union activists** to attend and participate
- Asking trade unions and affiliated organisations to consider **financial support**, particularly to help cover venue costs and travel for speakers where needed

Can you or your union help?
Do you want to get involved?
Or would you like more information?

We'd really welcome hearing from you!

[Get in touch](#)



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PROFITS, PENNY PINCHING, WE PAY

Arms spending lines the pockets of the rich while taxpayers foot the bill and urgent social needs go unmet



Photo: Jane Burlow/PA Wire

Hussein Ezzedine
Scottish PSC TU Officer
Edinburgh Branch

Workers at Leonardo in Edinburgh were recently forced to strike for a fair pay rise, this despite the company reporting nearly €18 billion in revenue and over €1.5 billion in profits in 2024.

Blood soaked billions - dripping with the blood of Palestinian men, women and children. War is a racket and genocide a lucrative business opportunity for the arms industry but deadly for ordinary people.

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PROFITS, PENNY PINCHING, WE PAY

In January, Leonardo hosted the UK Defence Secretary, John Healey, and the Secretary of State for Scotland, Douglas Alexander, as the Ministry of Defence announced over £650 million in “defence” spending. This was presented as securing 1,500 jobs across the UK, even though none of these jobs were actually at risk.

The narrative is shameless. A superficial framing hides the truth. This is a colossal waste of public money.

Taxpayer funds are poured into an industry that employs few, while those workers still struggle to get a fair payrise. Meanwhile, the wealthy profit, and our money funds global violence, killing people just like us.

Imagine if, instead of boosting Leonardo’s profits, the £650 million had been invested in North Edinburgh, a long-neglected community with urgent social and environmental needs. Or imagine it funding renewable energy, offshore wind, or low-carbon technology. These sectors desperately need investment and skilled workers. They could create far more jobs while building a safer, sustainable future. Transition from arms production must support workers and communities, but continuing to subsidise killing is neither economically efficient nor morally acceptable.

To put it in perspective, the £650 million could simply have been divided among the 1,500 workers, giving each nearly half a million pounds! They would likely have spent it locally, boosting the economy. Nobody would have died, no violence would have been funded. It would just have been a big give away. Yet instead, the rich profit, and workers whether in Palestine or elsewhere continue to die. We pay. They profit. It is a big give away, but with deadly consequences. They are laughing at us.

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Join the latest Workplace Day of Action Thursday 12 February 2026

Hussein Ezzedine
Scottish PSC TU Officer
Edinburgh Branch

Workers across Scotland are again being called on to take part in a Workplace Day of Action for Palestine.

From local authority pension funds and public contracts to universities, cultural institutions, retail and manufacturing, Scottish institutions remain entangled in systems that enable Israel's genocide and apartheid against the Palestinian people.

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WORKPLACE DAY OF ACTION FOR PALESTINE

The days of action are about workers organising where we are, challenging that complicity, and demanding boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS).

For your first time taking an action, we suggest hosting a staff meeting to start conversations about how your workplace is complicit and launch your workplace campaign for Palestine.

But, decide together what action makes sense for your workplace. No action is too small!

Join the UK wide call to take action in workplaces. Actions may be big or small — what matters is making our solidarity impossible to ignore.

- Organise a demo — bring pots and pans & make a noise
- Work-to-rule / walkout as appropriate
- Organise a collection or petition
- Wear a badge or Keffiyeh
- Hold a silence
- Share a group solidarity photo
- Change email signatures or Outlook profile pics
- Host a speaker / solidarity discussion / teach-in
- Share flyers and materials
- Speak to us for more ideas - start organising today!



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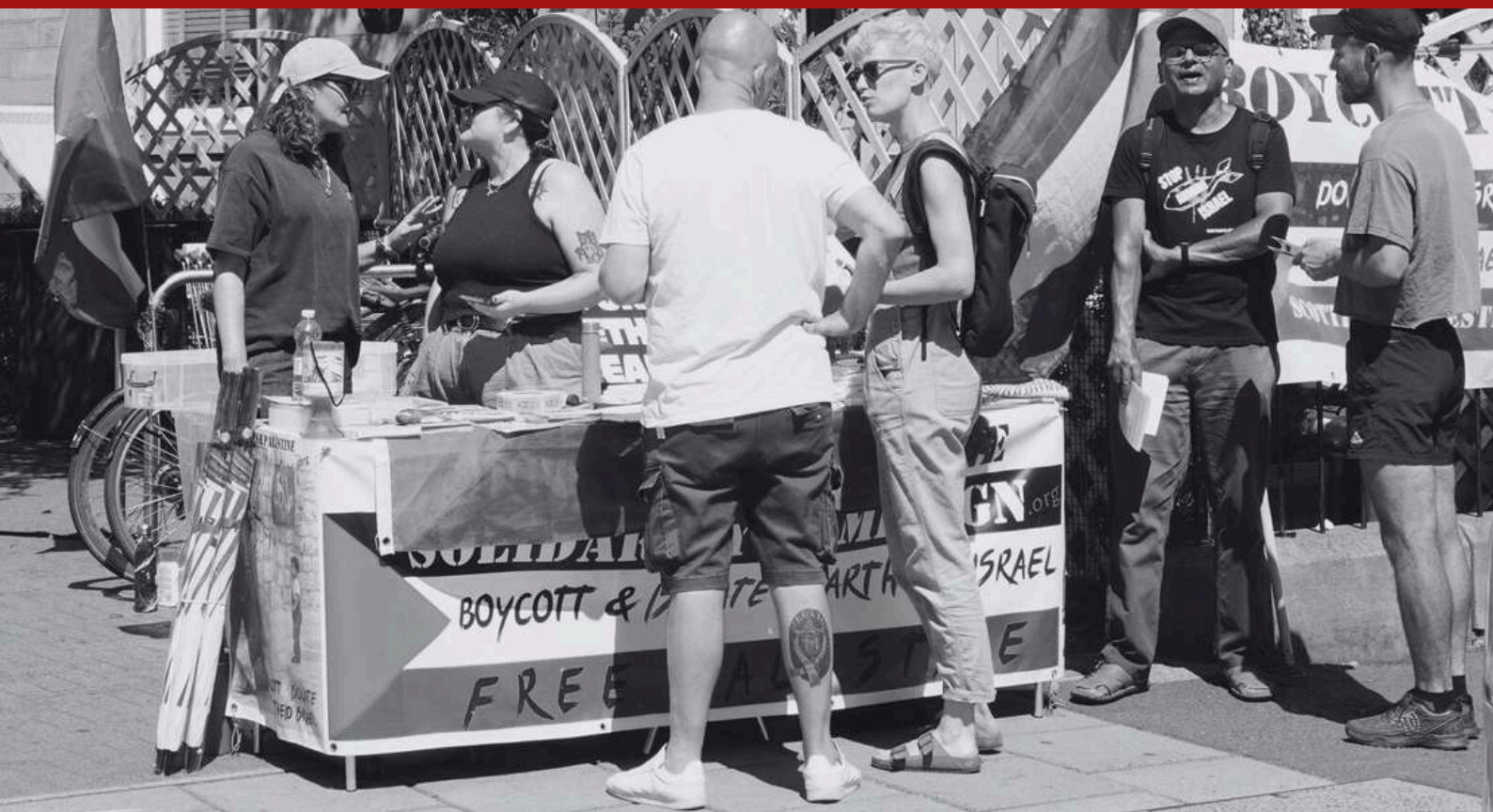


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GET IN TOUCH

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