

Motion 2: passed at UCU QUB Emergency General Meeting on 1 November 2023

Emergency Motion on the Crisis in Palestine/Israel

This branch notes:

1. The appalling loss of life on both sides of the Gaza border, with the Hamas attacks and retaliatory Israeli bombardment now opening up the possibility of a major regional war. Israel's bombing—its fifth major assault on Gaza since 2005—has been carried out with the full support of the major western powers (US/UK/EU) and has now (30 Oct) claimed at least 8000 civilian lives in Gaza, with more than three times that number wounded.
2. The US/Israeli [blocking](#) of humanitarian assistance to a population facing catastrophic conditions, and being compelled (in violation of international law) to abandon their homes and leave Gaza across the Egyptian border at Rafah.
3. Increasing attempts by governments across the west to criminalise solidarity with Palestine.
4. The threats to academic freedom through the targeting of academics for expressing pro-Palestinian opinions, cited in a report by [BRISMES](#) as contributing to a rising “atmosphere of fear and suspicion, particularly within Middle East Studies, [that] has reduced the space to discuss the history and context of one of the longest ongoing conflicts in the world today.”
5. The attempt, through imposition of the [IHRA definition of antisemitism](#), to suppress criticism of Israel—a campaign opposed not only by human rights groups across the globe but by many Israeli civil society groups, [and by 350 “scholars](#) in the fields of Holocaust history, Jewish studies, and Middle East studies.”

This branch reaffirms:

1. UCU's proud record of opposition to Islamophobia and antisemitism and all forms of racism.
2. Our abhorrence of the violence that has claimed innocent Palestinian, Lebanese, Israeli and Egyptian lives in recent weeks. We unequivocally condemn the murder of civilians, no matter their religion or nationality, and extend our deepest condolences to the families and friends who have lost loved ones and who continue to do so at this very moment.
3. UCU's longstanding support for the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, embodied in motions at Congress in 2021 condemning Israeli actions, including the 16-year siege and repeated intensive bombardment of Gaza, and [reaffirmed](#) by GS Jo Grady at the March for Palestine in London on 21 October.
4. The UCU's [conviction](#) that “the trade union movement is a crucial part of building lasting solidarity with the Palestinian people,” and the increasing involvement of the labour movement on both sides of the Irish border in grassroots solidarity work, including through the NIC-ICTU affiliated [Trade Union Friends of Palestine](#).
5. The conclusions drawn by international human rights organizations, including [Human Rights Watch](#), [Amnesty International](#) and the Israeli-based [B'Tselem](#), that the “Israeli regime enacts in all the territory it controls (Israeli sovereign territory, East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip) an apartheid regime.”
6. The longstanding support of the UCU, NIC-ICTU and the British TUC for the non-violent BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) campaign, aimed at bringing pressure to bear on apartheid Israel to end the occupation.

This branch resolves:

1. To demand the UK government cease all military support to Israel and use its influence to call for an immediate ceasefire and to affirm our opposition to the comments of QUB Chancellor Hilary Clinton in her rejection of calls for a ceasefire;
2. To call for the release of all hostages being held by Hamas in Gaza, and for the release of all Palestinian minors and adults being held in administrative detention in Israeli jails;

3. To affiliate to and send delegate(s) to the NIC-ICTU supported *Trade Union Friends of Palestine*;
4. To campaign against any attempts by the Tory government or NI authorities to restrict rights to free expression and protest in solidarity with Palestine;
5. To support staff and students' right to speak on Palestine on social media and in academic work, and to challenge any attempts by management at UK/Irish universities to frustrate this right;
6. To implement UCU national policy in support of BDS and sponsor a series of campus forums aimed at informing our members and developing a strategy for implementing BDS at QUB.
7. To support demonstrations for Palestinian solidarity and an immediate ceasefire by urging members to attend and ensuring that the Queen's UCU banner is present.