

In light of the recent military attacks on Gaza that have caused a devastating impact and killed over 1,300 people and destroyed infrastructure including hospitals, schools and civilian homes many unions, churches, non-profit and human rights groups around the world have come together to condemn the attacks in Gaza and show solidarity with the people of Palestine. In hearing and responding to the international call for human rights and international law, members of CUPE and trade unionists have come together to talk about how to respond and further our solidarity efforts and resolutions that have already been passed at Ontario Conventions.

The National constitution of CUPE mandates us to do international solidarity work and CUPE has a proud history of supporting workers around the globe and standing up for peace. Everyday on our campuses and in our workplaces, we seek as CUPE members to defend human rights for all, we stand up to defend and support public education and services. In this understanding of our great traditions and principled positions in our union, a group of workers and locals came together to talk about how to further the work of solidarity and to put into action research, education and lobbying strategies that seek to help us understand the international connections of war and to put pressure on institutions and directly to the state of Israel to comply with international law.

The motion that is being put forward at the Ontario University Workers conference is one which seeks to implement actions to the motion that the 2006 Ontario Convention has mandated - a call for the support of Palestinians and a boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign against the Israeli state.

The purpose of this motion is NOT to boycott individual academics, or to suppress freedom of speech or thought, in fact it is the exact opposite.

The motion encourages campus locals to do education and to debate the issue of an institutional based boycott. It allows for CUPE members and the university community to learn more about the role that their institution or its research may be playing in aiding the use of war and military intervention.

If passed the motion would be left up to campus locals and members to determine how to implement the motion, this allows for and supports the autonomy of members to determine the suitable actions on each campus; however education is a main focus that would be beneficial to opening up discussions and a necessary dialogue on every campus.

In supporting the motion below, the University sector will aid in furthering and supporting the motion that was already passed by the membership of CUPE Ontario and it would allow for the OUWCC to express its collective voice to condemn the most recent assault on Gaza, the bombing of the Islamic University and the Israeli military attack on several other educational and humanitarian institutions in Gaza.

Our goal and our hope is that through education, research and collective lobbying we can as workers and community members put pressure on the state of Israel to fully comply with international law by cutting ties and institutional connections that are involved in the oppression of the Palestinian people.

The motion that is being served is below, and we hope that in taking a principled stand for human rights and an end to the furthering of war, your Local and the delegates attending the conference can vote to support this resolution.

Moved by: 1281, 3907, 3903 and 1334

The OUWCC will:

1. Affiliate to the RIGHT TO EDUCATION campaign at Birzeit University to defend the right of Palestinian students to have access to education and educational institutions in the Palestinian territory, and seek to raise awareness about the issues facing Palestinian education, students and teachers under Israeli military occupation, and further that it will encourage member locals to affiliate to the Right to Education campaign
2. Encourage its member locals to hold public forums to discuss an academic boycott of Israeli academic institutions, and
3. Ask campus representatives to work with locals to investigate both research and investment links between Ontario Universities and the state of Israel's military, and
4. Mobilize campus allies to pressure universities from engaging in acts of cooperation that assist and aid military research at the institutional level with Israeli universities;
5. Work with campus and community allies to pressure Ontario universities to refuse collaborations, corporate partnerships and investments that would benefit, either directly or indirectly, military research or the Israeli state military;
6. Request funding and support from CUPE Ontario to conduct an education campaign on the academic boycott, coordinate education sessions and assist in the implementation of resolution 50 as passed in 2006

Because, in response to a call from Palestinian civil society and trade unions, CUPE Ontario's Resolution 50 (in 2006) calls upon the Union and its locals to support boycotts, divestments and sanctions (BDS) of the state of Israel, so long as that state continues to occupy Palestinian territory and refuses to respect and uphold international law and covenants, and

Because the latest Israeli attack on Gaza killed over 1300 people, wounded thousands, and destroyed hospitals, schools, roads, power plants, sewage and water infrastructure, and thousands of civilian homes, and as a direct consequence of the attacks by the Israeli military, the Gazan education system has been unable to function, and

Because Israel's direct bombing of universities and schools and its years-long blockade forbidding educational supplies, fuel and other basic necessities, or movement of people including students and teachers, has brought about the collapse of the education system in Gaza, and

Because all three major Palestinian trade union federations are signatories of the Palestinian Civil Society for Boycott Divestment and Sanctions call including: The General Union of Palestinian Workers, PGFTU, and the Federation of Independent Unions.