

## Questions & Answers About Resolution 50

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### **What does Resolution 50 say?**

CUPE Ontario will:

1. With Palestine solidarity and human rights organization, develop an education campaign about the apartheid nature of the Israeli state and the political and economic support of Canada for these practices.
2. Support the international campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law including the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.
3. Call on CUPE National to commit to research into Canadian involvement in the occupation and call on the CLC to join us in lobbying against the apartheid-like practices of the Israeli state and call for the immediate dismantling of the wall.

### **What is the objective of this policy of CUPE Ontario?**

The objective of CUPE Ontario's policy is to draw attention to the plight of ordinary Palestinians. It compliments our national policy calling for a peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. The centre of CUPE's policy on this conflict has been a mutual and equal respect for both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

### **How did this happen? What was the process to pass this resolution?**

Resolutions are submitted for convention 75 days in advance by local unions, committees, and the CUPE Ontario executive board. Resolution 50 came

from a number of local unions. It was included in the resolutions book mailed to all affiliated locals 35 days before the convention.

At convention, the resolutions committee creates a priority list of resolutions for debate by the membership. This resolution was properly submitted, published, dealt with by the resolutions committee, and brought forward and debated by the convention delegates. It was voted on and passed.

### **What is the history of CUPE Ontario's position on the conflict in the Middle East?**

CUPE Ontario first passed policy on the Middle East Conflict in 2002.

The 2002 Resolution passed by the convention in Windsor included a "Call for and actively work toward an end to the suicide bombings and other acts of violence that take the lives of innocent people."

Subsequent International resolutions have been debated and added as policy.

For example, an emergency resolution was passed in Ottawa recently that was "demanding that the Egyptian state immediately release all those imprisoned in recent weeks, and that the government take immediate measures to guarantee judicial independence as demanded by Egyptian judges."

### **Have other unions passed resolutions on the Middle East?**

CUPE National has policy on the conflict in the Middle East, which is guided by the following resolution that was properly submitted, dealt with and debated at the National Convention in 2003 stating that we:

demand that the Israeli Government immediately withdraw from the occupied territories and abide by UN Resolution 242 and 338"; and

call for and actively work towards an end to all acts of violence that take the lives of innocent people, whether they be Palestinian or Israeli"; and, help develop a peace process based on equality between Israelis and Palestinians and based on the implementation of United Nations resolutions and international law."

The Canadian Labour Congress has policy guided by resolutions passed in 2002 in Vancouver and 2005 in Montreal:

These resolutions, among other things, called for:

Israel to end the occupations of, and Jewish settlements in, the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem (called for by the United Nations (UN) resolutions 242 and 338); and

a peace process be developed, based on equality between Jewish-Israelis and Palestinians, that fully respects international law and UN resolutions; and

the Canadian Labour Congress condemn the violence perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces against Palestinian lives and property and call on the Israeli government to cease its military aggression; and

the CLC similarly condemn Palestinian suicide bombings and call on the Palestinian Authority to stop the killing of Israeli citizens; and

That the Canadian Labour Congress demand that the Canadian government pressure Israel to uphold international law and implement the International Court of Justice decision by dismantling the Israeli separation wall on occupied Palestinian territory;

This means that every union in Canada who is an affiliate of the Canadian Labour Congress supports this position – which encompasses the safe right of return of Palestinian refugees.

## **Why would our union be interested in international conflicts - - shouldn't we just worry about bargaining and grievance handling?**

CUPE members believe strongly in human rights. As a union we have always defended the human rights of individuals and communities both in Canada and internationally.

Delegates to CUPE Ontario's May convention-the largest ever in the Ontario division's 43 -year history with almost 900 voting delegates-approved a plan of action aimed at fighting privatization, bargaining better pensions, keeping health public and local, as well as defending human rights.

Building Strong Communities, includes a focus on issues of human rights and equity. Whether through bargaining or campaigns, we have made the connections between our jobs, communities and what is happening in the global context.

For example, at CUPE Ontario conventions we have passed resolutions that have condemned the repugnant treatment of workers and ordinary people by countries such as apartheid South Africa, Iran, Colombia, Egypt, and Israel-to name a few. We have also specifically made the links between globalization, privatization and the plight of workers in countries such as England, Argentina, Mexico, and South Africa, to name a few.

## **What are some of the human rights issues facing Palestinians?**

In Palestine according to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA):

- o More than two thirds live on less than \$2 per day.
- o Closures between Israel, West Bank and Gaza and within those territories has put more than 112,000 Palestinians (16% of the workforce) out of work since 2000.

- o Unemployment is now over 50 per cent.
- o More than 500,000 children no longer have regular access to schooling.
- o Regular vaccination programs have been impeded, and in some areas, water and sewage systems have been destroyed, leaving children even more vulnerable to infection and disease. In August 2002 a study funded by the United States Agency for International Development reported that malnutrition and anemia among Palestinian children had increased to levels normally associated with emergencies in sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Why did CUPE Ontario hold this vote on Saturday?**

The CUPE Ontario convention has run from Thursday until Saturday until 2005, when the start was moved to Wednesday. CUPE is a secular organization that holds meetings, schools and other events every day of the week.