

A brief history of CUPE Ontario Palestine solidarity

CUPE Ontario Resolution No. 50

In May 2006, nearly 900 delegates at the CUPE Ontario annual convention adopted Resolution No. 50. This resolution was brought forward as part of a global campaign calling for the boycott, divestment and sanctions on the state of Israel until it ceased: expanding on the Palestinian lands it has occupied since 1967, prohibiting Palestinian freedom of movement and access to earning a livelihood, and undermining Palestinian self-determination.

The international community as represented by the member states of the United Nations regularly reaffirm these actions as the primary obstacles to establishing peace between Palestinians and Israelis. In fact the United Nations Security Council, as recently as 2016, unequivocally denounced Israel's building of settlements beyond the "4 June 1967 lines" as having "no legal validity and constitut[ing] a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace" (Source: [United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334](#)).

Resolution No. 50 mandated CUPE Ontario to three actions:

- 1** With Palestine solidarity and human rights organizations, develop an education campaign about the apartheid nature of the Israeli 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.

CUPE Ontario is proud to have been the first major trade union to do so in Canada and stands in solidarity with many other unions and federations of labour who have since adopted similar resolutions:



Canadian Union of Postal Workers in 2008



Centrale des syndicats du Québec (Quebec Labour Congress) in 2009



Public Service Alliance of Canada in 2012



Confédération des syndicats nationaux in 2015



UNIFOR in 2017



Canadian Federation of Students in 2018



Canadian Union of Public Employees - Manitoba in 2023

Israeli Apartheid

Resolution No. 50 spurred CUPE Ontario to create and identify educational resources for members of CUPE about the decades long Israeli occupation of Palestine and the establishment of an apartheid regime. A similar educational resource was written by CUPE British Columbia in 2007, titled “The Wall Must Fall”, which relied extensively on reports from Amnesty International, the World Bank, and the United Nations to make the case “that peace requires the end of the Israeli occupation of Palestine Territories (West Bank and Gaza), the dismantling of the Wall and an end to violence against all Israeli and Palestinian civilians.”

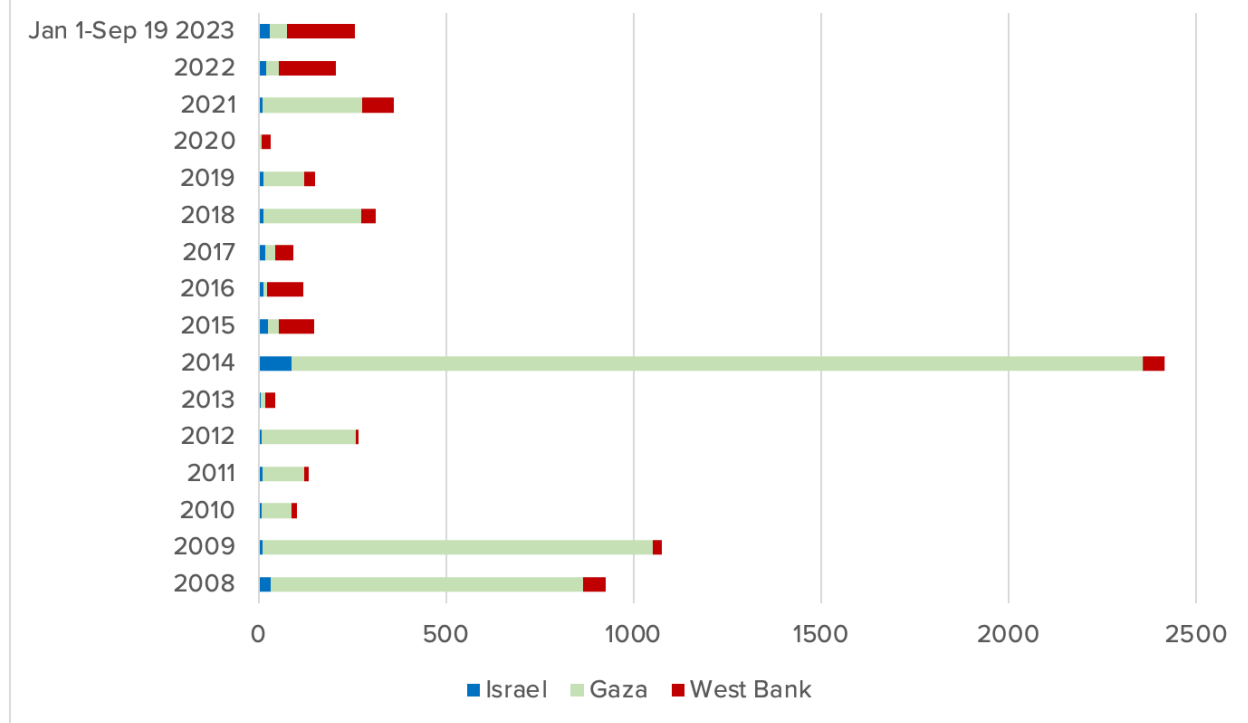
Internationally renowned rights organizations such as [Amnesty International](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), and the Israeli human rights organization [B’tselem](#) have each concluded that Israel practices apartheid in its treatment of Palestinians both within its borders and in the occupied territories. International law [defines apartheid](#) as inhumane acts carried out “for the purpose of establishing and maintaining

domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them.”

Almost two decades has elapsed since CUPE Ontario’s original Resolution No. 50 and in that time various intersecting and overlapping crises have occurred. Nonetheless, the occupation, apartheid and accompanying violence persisted.

The current conflict is an inflection point. The violence inflicted on Israeli civilians by Hamas militants on October 7th, 2023 has been met with Israeli military violence so disproportionate that it is being seen as a precursor to a [genocide of Palestinians in Gaza](#) by 35 independent experts in the UN human rights system. This must not be allowed to pass. Source: Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/gaza-un-experts-call-international-community-prevent-genocide-against>

Conflict-related Fatalities: Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel

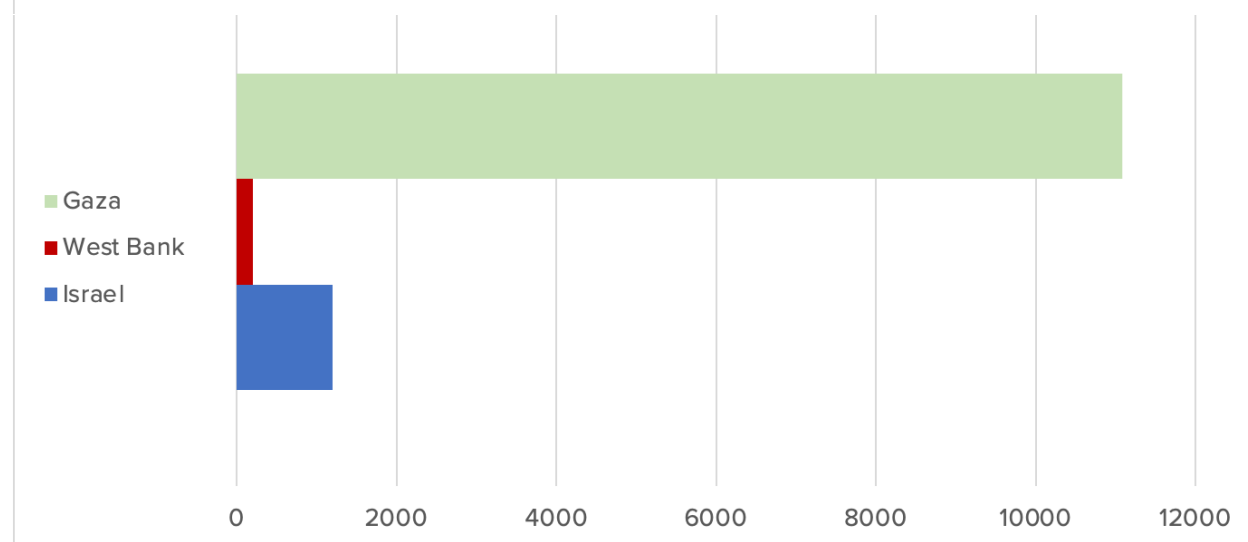


Source:

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA):

<https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>

Preliminary, unverified deaths since the outbreak of the current conflict on October 7th 2023



Source:

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as of Nov 19, 2023:

<https://www.ochaopt.org/updates>

CUPE National and CUPE Ontario have urged the Government of Canada to call for a ceasefire since

October 10th, 2023. At our union's national convention, held October 23rd to 27th, delegates adopted Emergency Resolution 804, mandating our union to:

- 1 Demand the Canadian government call for an immediate ceasefire in Israel-Palestine, an end to its sale of arms to Israel, an end to diplomatic immunity for the state of Israel, and for an end to Israel's blockade of Gaza and the restoration of aid and the basic necessities of life;
- 2 Conduct member education about the history of Israel's occupation and colonization of Palestine, Canada's complicity and what trade unions can do to support a just peace.

What Your Local Can Do:

CUPE Ontario Resolution No. 50 & CUPE National Emergency Resolution 804 demand we voice support for a just peace. This means calling for an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. All peoples have an inalienable right to self-determination and the right to exist. CUPE Locals in Ontario are encouraged to:

- 1 Hold member educationals for their local membership using the CUPE Ontario educational materials that are being updated.
- 2 Write to elected representatives asking them to publicly call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, an end to Israel's occupation and colonization of Palestinian territory, and a demand that they hold the State of Israel accountable for ignoring international law including revoking diplomatic immunity.
- 3 Participate in Palestinian solidarity actions in your community

Locals should contact CUPE Ontario if they are seeking to build on this important solidarity work.

You can do so by sending an email to info@cupe.on.ca. To visit the linked sites, see the factsheet online at cupe.on.ca.



Together, our combined actions will make a difference.