

**Justice for Palestine! European Trade Union's Initiative against EU complicity with Israeli
Violations of International Law**

Invitation to Participate

Dear colleagues,

We are writing to you to request that you join us in a cross-Europe, cross-organisation initiative which will take place at the end of this year.

The European Coordination of Committees and Association for Palestine (ECCP) in cooperation with Trade Union Friends of Palestine (TUFPP) from Ireland and European trade unions determined that we can no longer tolerate the EU's complicity in Israeli violations of international law. We wish to develop a strategy of building stronger links with the European trade union movement in order to more effectively challenge and campaign against EU's complicity.

To this end we are in the process of planning a constructive and effective series of workshops and actions to help mobilise support from the trade union movement. We ask for your help, and invite you to join us in the trade union group that is planning this initiative.

The EU effectively colludes with and provides direct support to Israel's violations of international law in a number of varying ways, not least of which include the ongoing trade with illegal Israeli settlements, and the provision of research funding to Israeli military companies, such as Elbit Systems and Israeli Aerospace Industries.

In November 2014, more than 300 unions, NGOs and other civil society organisations from across Europe called¹ on the EU to end its support for Israel's crimes, including by **suspending the EU-Israel Association Agreement**. The EU-Israel Association Agreement grants Israel preferential access to European markets, allows Israeli ministries and weapons companies to receive EU funding and provides Israel with the political support it needs to carry out its crimes with continued impunity.

The Article 2 of the Association Agreement states that: "Relations between the Parties... shall be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles (...)". The continued application of the EU-Israel Association Agreement despite Israel's clear violation of the Article 2 clause sends a message to Israel that its flagrant violations of international law will be tolerated and will not result in any meaningful impact on its close relations with the EU. This creates a climate of impunity.

Palestinian organisations, including the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, Defence for Children International - Palestine Section, the Palestinian NGO Network and the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions have written² to the EU to demand the suspension of the Association Agreement due to Israel's flagrant breaches of the human rights clauses.

In addition there is a need for broad European mobilisation in order to oppose the dangerous Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations and the related attempts to use the TTIP process³ to restrict freedom of political expression and campaigning in solidarity with the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom, justice and equality.

Trade Union Friends of Palestine, European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine

¹ http://www.eccpalestine.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/European_call_EU10.pdf

² <http://www.eccpalestine.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Palestinian-letter-Ashton-18-Sep-2014.pdf>

³ On 29 June 2015, President Barack Obama signed into law the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act, granting him 'fast track' authority over trade negotiations such as TTIP. Section 20 of the Act establishes the "principal negotiating objectives" for commercial partnerships in TTIP as including the provision "to discourage politically motivated actions to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel and to seek the elimination of politically motivated non-tariff barriers on Israeli goods, services, or other commerce imposed on the State of Israel."

and our trade union partners are proposing that this coming Autumn a joint demonstration take place in Brussels in front of the European Commission, coinciding with a set of workshops and meetings to help further develop and coordinate solidarity action. We believe that the importance and value of this initiative lies primarily in the unprecedented congregation of representatives from European trade unions, Palestinian trade unions, and other solidarity organisations, reflecting global distress and anger at the exploitation of Palestinian workers, the oppression endured by the Palestinian people including the on-going siege of Gaza and the recent escalation of tension and killings of Palestinians in the West Bank.

We hope that this action will help to strengthen relations and solidarity between the European trade unions, civil society organisations and our colleagues in Palestine. It is becoming increasingly vital to discuss our roles as trade unions and solidarity organisations in the European context, and thus ensure a coordinated Europe wide mobilization to bring an end to EU complicity in Israel's violations of international law.

The specific framework of the initiative is yet to be defined by the working group, which will consist of representatives of European trade unions. Although we are writing to you primarily to ask your organisation to join the demonstration and series of workshops at the end of the year, **we would also be greatly honoured if you would nominate a representative of your organisation** to join the working group to draft the framework and prepare the programme for our joint action.

The first meeting of the working group will take place on April 22 late afternoon in Brussels.

Given the importance of this campaign, and the need for additional resources to ensure effective coordination and mobilization, we request that your organization also consider providing a financial donation to help fund this initiative.

We hope sincerely that you will give serious consideration to this request, particularly in the light of the intensification of the suffering inflicted on the people of Palestine, and their repeated requests for people of conscience throughout the world to take action.

We look forward to your response. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any queries, comments, or suggestions at eccp.brussels@gmail.com