

Resolution in Support of Palestinian Liberation

WHEREAS, we are the Legal Services Staff Association 2320 (LSSA 2320), a wall-to-wall union of the United Auto Workers (UAW) representing the secretaries, process servers, paralegals, receptionists, social workers, attorneys, and other support staff and non-management employees of Legal Services NYC (LSNYC) and Mobilization for Justice (MFJ); and

WHEREAS, the people and communities we serve face institutionalized racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, class exploitation, and other forms of oppression and include low to moderate-income New Yorkers, immigrants, people with disabilities, workers facing discrimination, and many refugees displaced by colonialist and imperialist aggressions, of which many were armed, funded, and instigated by the U.S. empire and its proxies; and

WHEREAS, [Palestinian trade unions have made an urgent call](#) to their international counterparts to pass motions in support of Palestine, to take action against companies involved in implementing Israel's brutal and illegal siege, and to pressure their governments to stop all military trade with Israel; and

WHEREAS, the [UAW represents workers](#) at plants that manufacture weapons for the Israeli military; and

WHEREAS, Israel and the United States are both settler-colonial states established through the displacement and extermination of indigenous peoples; and

WHEREAS, the Israeli state was established through the uprooting and displacement of over [750,000 Palestinians](#) during the 1947-1948 Nakba and denial of that historical fact is a form of genocide denialism; and

WHEREAS, [71% of Gaza's population are refugees](#) from other parts of historic Palestine; and

WHEREAS, the latest round of Israeli attacks on Gaza and settler attacks on Palestinians in the [West Bank](#) and '48 Palestine are part of an ongoing, century-long history of Zionist settler-colonialism, dispossession, ethnic cleansing, racism, [genocide](#), and [apartheid](#); and

WHEREAS, since October 7, 2023 and as of November 19, 2023, the Israeli military has killed more than 13,000 Palestinians including 5,500 children and will likely have killed many more by the time this resolution is passed; and

WHEREAS, the Gaza health ministry has announced that it no longer has the ability to count the dead due to a total collapse of medical infrastructure and the difficulty of retrieving bodies from areas overrun by Israeli tanks; and

WHEREAS, over 10,000 Palestinians are currently illegally detained in Israeli prisons, many without charge or access to counsel; and

WHEREAS, since October 7, 2023 and as of November 21, 2023, Israeli airstrikes have destroyed over 50% of homes in Gaza, leaving more than half of the population homeless, all while state-backed settlers continue to dispossess Palestinians of their land in the West Bank at an accelerated rate; and

WHEREAS, since October 7, 2023, and as of November 21, 2023, the Israeli military has targeted and killed numerous journalists and their families, killing [more than 53 journalists](#) in this time and likely more by the time this statement is released; and

WHEREAS, since October 7, 2023, and as of November 21, 2023, the Israeli military has killed at least 102 UN aid workers and many more will likely have been killed by the time this statement is released; and

WHEREAS, the Palestinian people, like all peoples living under occupation, have a right to resist their occupier including by taking up arms, a right which has been [recognized under international law for decades](#); and

WHEREAS, Palestinian liberation is not merely an international issue but a domestic one as millions of families suffer within the U.S. while the government provides billions in aid to Israel annually, with an additional \$14.3 billion earmarked for Israel's war on Gaza approved by the U.S. House of Representatives on [November 2, 2023](#); and

WHEREAS, Zionism is a settler-colonial, imperialist, racist political ideological project that is distinct from Judaism; and

WHEREAS, anti-Zionism is the rejection of this political ideology and the actions taken by the Israeli state in furtherance of this ideology, and [not a condemnation of the Jewish peoples, culture, or religion](#); and

WHEREAS, conflation of anti-Zionism and antisemitism is ahistorical, undemocratic and is used to silence pro-Palestinian viewpoints, including those of Jews globally, as our many Jewish drafters can attest; and

WHEREAS, workers across the country have experienced professional and personal reprisal for expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people; and

WHEREAS, law students, graduate students, and undergraduate students are being doxxed for expressing support for the Palestinian people and opposition to the Israeli occupation and genocide, and have faced disciplinary action and censorship at the hands of academic institutions; and

WHEREAS, institutions of power, including governments and large nonprofit legal organizations, have imposed a culture of silence around the Israeli regime's recent campaign of ethnic cleansing in Gaza; and

WHEREAS, the New York County Defender Services unjustly forced public defender [Victoria Ruiz](#) to resign after she was targeted by a doxxing campaign that misrepresented her actions at a vigil for Palestinians killed by the Israeli state; and

WHEREAS, The Bronx Defenders and other organizations with unions which have released [statements](#) in solidarity with Palestine have been threatened with censorship-based defunding efforts which undermine vital and critical legal services provided to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, risking their safety, housing, families, and livelihoods; and

WHEREAS, the groundless accusations of antisemitism from leadership at The Legal Aid Society, New York Legal Assistance Group, and The Bronx Defenders only serve to further the censorship of a political movement for liberation and cheapen the very real antisemitic experiences of the Jewish people; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of Nassau County has [enjoined](#) the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys' democratic vote on its resolution on November 19, 2023 in an unconstitutional prior restraint and brazen attack on union democracy and free speech; and

WHEREAS, tenant attorneys in Bronx Housing Court have been harassed and interrogated for their support or perceived support for Palestine, and Jewish tenant attorneys have been subjected to antisemitic harassment including accusations of not being "real" Jews or of being "self-hating" Jews; and

WHEREAS, management has failed to create a safe space for staff who are being inappropriately questioned or harassed about their personal or political views; has failed to take any steps to address this inappropriate behavior; and has left clients vulnerable to suboptimal resolution of their cases; and

WHEREAS, Palestinians are deserving of human rights and [a free Palestine from the river to the sea](#); therefore be it

RESOLVED, we express our solidarity with the Palestinian people and their struggle for national liberation; and

RESOLVED, we demand an immediate end to the bombing and siege of Gaza, all Israeli hostilities and military actions, and all forms of settler violence being perpetrated on the Palestinian people; and

RESOLVED, that we endorse the October 16, 2023 call issued by a coalition of Palestinian trade unions to:

1. Refuse to build weapons destined for Israel.
2. Refuse to transport weapons to Israel.
3. Pass motions in their trade union to this effect.
4. Take action against complicit companies involved in implementing Israel's brutal and illegal siege, especially if they have contracts with such institutions.
5. Pressure governments to stop all military trade with Israel, and in the case of the U.S., funding to it.

RESOLVED, we pledge to uphold previous Palestinian trade union appeals for solidarity by divesting from Israel Bonds, and supporting the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign; and

RESOLVED, we stand in solidarity with workers who have participated in actions seeking to stop the manufacture and shipment of weapons to Israel; and

RESOLVED, we call on the U.S. government to cut all aid to Israel and use all available means to pressure its government to end the genocide against the Palestinian people; and

RESOLVED, we demand the release of the over 10,000 Palestinians being unlawfully detained by the Israeli authorities; and

RESOLVED, we reject the conflation of criticism of the State of Israel with antisemitism; and

RESOLVED, that we condemn the escalating Islamophobic [hate crimes](#) and [antisemitic attacks](#); and

RESOLVED, that we reject all attempts to intimidate workers for their political speech, and we will organize against any attempts by our employers to procure funds denied to other legal services providers due to their unions' political activism in support of Palestinians and in opposition to the Israeli apartheid regime and occupation.