



# Mondoweiss

News & Opinion About Palestine, Israel & the United States

ACTIVISM

## UAW Arab Caucus: UAW must move from ceasefire declaration to stopping weapons for Israel

UAW Arab Caucus to union president Shawn Fain: The union must take action to translate the UAW's ceasefire declaration to practical interruption of the weapons our UAW siblings are making, sending to Israel, and are being used to kill our families.

BY [UAW ARAB CAUCUS](#) - FEBRUARY 14, 2024 - 0

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January 1974

REVOLUTION



*Arab auto workers and supporters in Detroit protest UAW's purchase of \$1 million of Israeli bonds. Demo of nearly 2000 on ~~Dec 6~~ was held outside pro-Zionist dinner at which UAW head Woodcock was "honored."*

"PHOTO DATED 28 NOVEMBER 1973 OF ARAB AUTO WORKERS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS IN DETROIT PROTEST, PUBLISHED IN REVOLUTION, JANUARY 1974." (PHOTO VIA THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY DIGITAL COLLECTIONS)

Editor's Note: The following letter was sent by the UAW Arab Caucus to United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain on February 12, 2024.

Shawn Fain  
President, United Auto Workers

Dear Shawn,

We write to you as an Arab caucus in the UAW on day 129 of the U.S.-funded Israeli genocide of Gaza's Palestinians to ask you meet with us this week.

Yesterday, Americans watched the Superbowl, including vicious Israeli propaganda ads that lawyers have said violate FDC regulations. Thinking that people who have been steadfastly resisting our complicity as taxpayers in this genocide would be distracted by the Superbowl (as they did during Thanksgiving, Black Friday, and Christmas), Israel aerial bombed Palestinian homes, mosques, and hospitals in the “Safe Zone” region of Rafah– the last place that Palestinian civilians can go. As you know, the weapons Israel is using are paid for by U.S. taxpayer money – 14.5 billion dollars was sent since October 2023 in addition to the 3.8 billion dollars the U.S. sends every year. On this same Super Bowl Sunday massacre, the U.S. Senate met in a secret session and advanced another 14.1 billion dollar package to Israel. On top of it all, many of the weapons being supplied are made in UAW unionized shops. It is abundantly clear how central our role as U.S. residents, laborers, and American voters is to Israel’s U.S.-supported ethnic cleansing campaign – and it’s never been more clear to us the role that the UAW can play in putting an end to it.

As Arab members of the UAW, we have been asking for a meeting with you since late October. In addition to emailing you ourselves, our fellow UAW members sent hundreds of emails on our behalf, and people who see you regularly have asked directly for this meeting. We’ve been given a wide range of excuses as to why this meeting hasn’t yet happened. All the while we are grieving the loss of dozens of family members, livelihoods, witnessing direct violence and incitement to violence against Arabs in the US – including those of us who are members of Local 600 in Dearborn which a *Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed just called the “jihad capital of America”. We are terrified that this war is intended to expand to the entire Middle East region, and harm more and more of us here in the U.S. (Americans have already been killed in Gaza and the West Bank, and Palestinians targeted in the U.S.).

**We need you to meet with us now – you must take action to translate the UAW’s ceasefire declaration to practical interruption of the weapons which our UAW siblings are making, sending to Israel, and which are being used to kill our families.**

We need you to meet with us now – you must take action to translate the UAW’s ceasefire declaration to practical interruption of the weapons which our UAW siblings are making, sending to Israel, and which are being used to kill our families. We have lots of ideas of what that can look like, but we need the support of our reform leadership. You must show your accountability to your rank-and-file workers by sitting down with us, coming up with a plan of action for Palestine, and then following through on it.

**We aim to realize the dream of the original UAW Arab caucus, which undertook a wildcat strike in November 1973 in Dearborn, de-**

We aim to realize the dream of the original UAW Arab caucus, which undertook a wildcat strike in November 1973 in Dearborn, demanding the UAW divest from Israeli bonds. Fifty years later, nearly to the date this November, we celebrated as you and our elected leadership passed a ceasefire resolution and

## **mandating the UAW divest from Israeli bonds.**

created a committee to look into Divestment and a Just Transition– fulfilling the Arab caucus’s demands. We are grateful for your leadership on calling

for an end to the genocide and as our Arab caucus before us, we urge you to do much more.

The question of Palestine has moved U.S. residents in sustained resistance for months in ways unprecedented in decades. If UAWD and the reform leadership is going to stay in power and continue to push the labor agenda in this country, we will need to move beyond the supposed priorities of the traditional and often white male labor activists. We will need to work on campaigns and in ways that touch a wider range of diverse younger workers – Palestinian liberation is one such campaign, and we, as Arab unionists, know also that our liberation is interconnected. That is, we are already and will continue to work to connect with our more marginalized union siblings to bring all of our pressing issues to the forefront of the union.

This kind of work will bring more active members into the reform caucus and actually ensure the expansion of the UAW reform program. In fact, issues like the genocide in Palestine have already proven to be one of the most powerful activating and mobilizing forces for the labor movement. Fear, on the other hand, that taking an active stance on Palestine will alienate rank and file or leadership members of the Admin Caucus, will get us nowhere. Instead, it will just reproduce the same dynamic that UAWD is supposedly trying to shift. If our union’s power is to continue into the future in a diverse America, we must grow and become more committed to the cause of workers everywhere.

We need you to take action on Palestine, starting by meeting with us now. We, as Arab unionists, in turn, commit to helping to transform the UAW into a truly democratic and more powerful union that can fight the fascist turn in this country, and improve the conditions of all workers in the U.S. and everywhere.

In solidarity,

Mary Jirmanus Saba, UAW Local 2865

Alia ElKattan, UAW Local 2110

Shahinaz Geneid, GENU-UAW & HAW-UAW

Ignacia Lolas, UAW Local 2325

Mafaz Al-Suwaidan, HGSU-UAW Local 5118

On behalf of the UAW Arab Caucus

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