

SEIU LOCAL 1021 RESOLUTION CALLING FOR CEASEFIRE, HUMANITARIAN AID, AND AN END TO THE OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE

December 15, 2023

WHEREAS, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1021 represents over 60,000 employees in local governments, non-profit agencies, health care programs, and schools throughout Northern California. SEIU Local 1021 is a diverse, member-driven organization with members who work to make our cities, schools, colleges, counties, and special districts safe and healthy places to live and raise our families; and

WHEREAS, through our collective voice, we achieve justice, empowerment, and respect in every workplace. It's our social responsibility to foster inclusive and just conditions for our members and all of those we serve, and we undoubtedly extend that standard across the globe in shared humanity; and

WHEREAS, we take seriously the plea of "Never Again" and honor the lessons of the Holocaust by fighting anti-semitism, Islamophobia and ethno-nationalism everywhere; and

WHEREAS, we mourn the tragic loss of all Palestinian and Israeli civilian lives lost before and after the attacks of October 7th, including the decades-long military occupation, forced displacement, and oppression endured by Palestinians since 1948; and

WHEREAS, the relentless Israeli military attack on Gaza and the West Bank, in a disproportionate response, has already led to over twenty thousand Palestinian civilian deaths, nearly half of which are children¹; and

WHEREAS, Israel is violating international law by committing human rights violations and war crimes, including collective punishment, acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Specifically, these crimes include but are not limited to the following:

- Forcing over 1.7 million Palestinians² to leave their homes with nowhere safe to flee or find shelter
- Collectively punishing the Palestinian people through the destruction of Gazan civilian infrastructure including hospitals, schools, libraries, places of worship, and agriculture
- Denying water, food, electricity, fuel and medical aid, leading to the indiscriminate death of thousands of Palestinian civilians³
- Targeting of journalists, medical workers, and cultural workers
- Transferring Israeli civilians into territory it illegally occupies (the West Bank) via Jewish-only settlements⁴
- Restricting freedom of movement for Palestinians⁵
- Arbitrary arrests and administrative detention against Palestinian civilians including children; and

WHEREAS, since World War II, Israel has been the largest overall recipient of US foreign military aid, receiving over \$150 billion since 1946, and Biden's proposed \$14.3 billion in additional aid for Israel will take funding from the essential jobs we perform and services we provide as public sector employees; and

WHEREAS, Palestinian trade unions call for workers around the world to stand in solidarity to "end all forms of complicity with Israel's crimes" and to "pass motions in their trade union to this effect";

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, SEIU Local 1021 calls for, and on elected officials to call for:

¹Over twenty thousand Palestinian civilian deaths, nearly half of which are children

Statistics on the Israeli Genocide in the Gaza Strip (07 October - 24 November 2023), Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, 24 Nov. 2023, <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/5981/Statistics-on-the-Israeli-Genocide-in-the-Gaza-Strip-%2807-October---24-November-2023%29>.

²Forcing over 1.7 million Palestinians to leave their homes

Statistics on the Israeli Genocide in the Gaza Strip (07 October - 24 November 2023), Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, 24 Nov. 2023, <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/5981/Statistics-on-the-Israeli-Genocide-in-the-Gaza-Strip-%2807-October---24-November-2023%29>.

³Indiscriminate death of thousands of Palestinian civilians

"Civilians in Gaza Must Not Be Collectively Punished." *United Nations*, United Nations, <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15473.doc.htm>.

⁴Transferring Israeli civilians into territory it illegally occupies (the West Bank) via Jewish-only settlements

"ICC: Palestine is Newest member." *Human Rights Watch*, Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/01/icc-palestine-newest-member.

⁵Restricting freedom of movement for Palestinians

"Israel: 50 Years of Occupation Abuses." *Human Rights Watch*, Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/04/israel-50-years-occupation-abuses.

- An immediate and permanent ceasefire
- The restoration of food, clean water, fuel and electricity to Gaza
- The safe passage of substantial humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people
- The release of all hostages, including Palestinians being held in Israel jails without charge or trial
- Opposing all existing and any future military aid to Israel
- The withdrawal of Israeli forces and settlers illegally occupying Gaza and the West Bank
- An end to the occupation of Palestine and the apartheid policies of the Israeli state allowing for equal rights and self-determination of all Palestinians; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, given our history of standing up for the rights of the oppressed and working classes around the world, we encourage members and community to learn about the region, to better understand the historical context, so together we build empathy and compassion to deepen our humanity and strengthen our fight for justice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, We will defend members' and staff's rights to freedom of expression, including support for Palestinian liberation, and protect them from workplace discrimination and retaliation. We advocate for the dignity and safety of members and all people, so that no one is discriminated against because of their identity, ethnicity, religious affiliation, or allyship, in the fight for human rights, equity, and justice; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, that we shall call on the California Labor Federation, Central Labor Councils, SEIU California and SEIU International to adopt and disseminate similar resolutions, understanding that our collective struggle for justice as working people is the pathway to peace.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Anti-semitism

Hostility towards and discrimination against Jewish people.

("Anti-Semitism." *Oxford Reference*, Oxford Reference, www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095417471.)

Apartheid

The implementation and maintenance of a system of legalized racial segregation in which one racial group is deprived of political and civil rights.

("Wex." *Legal Information Institute*, Legal Information Institute, www.law.cornell.edu/wex/apartheid.)

Ceasefire

An agreement that regulates the cessation of all military activity for a given length of time in a given area. It may be declared unilaterally, or it may be negotiated between parties to a conflict.

("The Practical Guide to Humanitarian Law." *Medecins Sans Frontieres*, Medecins Sans Frontieres, <https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/cease-fire/>.)

Collective Punishment

The term refers not only to criminal punishment, but also to other types of sanctions, harassment or administrative action taken against a group in retaliation for an act committed by an individual/s who are considered to form part of the group. Such punishment therefore targets persons who bear no responsibility for having committed the conduct in question. Historically used as a deterrence tool by occupying powers to prevent attacks from resistance movements, collective punishments for acts committed by individuals during an armed conflict are prohibited by International Humanitarian Law against prisoners of war or other protected persons.

International humanitarian law prohibits collective punishment of prisoners of war or other protected persons for acts committed by individuals during an armed conflict.

The imposition of collective punishment is a war crime.

("How Does Law Protect in War?" *International Committee of the Red Cross*, International Committee of the Red Cross, https://casebook.icrc.org/a_to_z/glossary/collective-punishments.)

Ethnic Cleansing

Rendering an area ethnically homogeneous by using force or intimidation to remove persons of given groups from the area. A purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas.

The coercive practices used to remove the civilian population can include: murder, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, extrajudicial executions, rape and sexual assaults, severe physical injury to civilians, confinement of civilian population in ghetto areas, forcible removal, displacement and deportation of civilian population, deliberate military attacks or threats of attacks on civilians and civilian areas, use of civilians as human shields, destruction of property, robbery of personal property, attacks on hospitals, medical personnel, and locations with the Red Cross/Red Crescent emblem, among others.

("Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect." *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/ethnic-cleansing.shtml.)

Ethno-nationalism

The belief, theory, or doctrine that shared ancestry is the principal element of a cohesive national identity, and that a government should protect and promote the culture, language, and religion of one group, considered the primary or prestigious people of a nation, over other cultures, languages, or religions that may share that space in a multicultural society.

("Ethnonationalism." *Dictionary.com*, Dictionary.com, www.dictionary.com/browse/ethnonationalism.)

Genocide

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

1. Killing members of the group;
2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

("Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect." *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml.)

Islamophobia

Is hatred or fear of the Islamic religion and those who practice it.

("Islamophobia." *Oxford Reference*, Oxford Reference, www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100012452.)

Occupation

Article 42 of the 1907 Hague Regulations (HR) states that a "territory is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army. The occupation extends only to the territory where such authority has been established and can be exercised."

("Occupation and international humanitarian law: questions and answers." *International Committee of the Red Cross*, International Committee of the Red Cross, 8 Apr. 2004, www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/misc/634kfc.htm.)

Oppression

Unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power

("Dictionary." *Merriam-Webster*, Merriam-Webster, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/oppression.)

Self-Determination

The process by which a group of people, usually possessing a certain degree of national consciousness, form their own state and choose their own government.

("History and Society." *Britannica*, Britannica, www.britannica.com/topic/self-determination.)