



# Connecticut State Council of Machinists

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## RESOLUTION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE FOR THE PEOPLES OF PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

Whereas, the AFL-CIO has an historic relationship with the **Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU)** forged during President Sweeney's historic visit to Palestine in year 2000;

Whereas, for the past three years the **Connecticut AFL-CIO** and its affiliates have supported the human rights efforts of **the Tree of Life Educational Fund** in promoting a deeper understanding of the ongoing Israel/Palestine conflict, including engaging with PGFTU in response to their call for help to achieve a just peace in Israel and Palestine;

Whereas, the PGFTU has informed us of worsening conditions suffered by Palestinian workers and their families as a result of the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories including the indignities caused by Israeli checkpoints, unsafe working conditions and exploitation of workers;

Whereas, in response to an invitation from the PGFTU, our Executive-Secretary Pelletier encouraged a labor delegation to see first-hand the difficult conditions facing Palestinians. A delegation traveled to Palestine and Israel, including former CT AFL-CIO President John Olsen and present Connecticut AFL-CIO Executive Secretary and Connecticut Building Trades President Dave Roche along with Tree of Life representatives and representatives from the Machinist Union, the Steelworkers Union (Indiana) and the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers Union;

Whereas worker eyewitnesses like this returning delegation can provide first-hand accounts of the inhumane and declining conditions of Palestinians, and encourage passage of this resolution;

Whereas Israel has illegally occupied Palestinian lands since 1967 while building settlements, separation walls and by-pass roads on Palestinian lands that undermine a viable two-state solution;

Whereas the UN (OCHA) reports that over 600,000 Israeli settlers now live in the occupied Palestinian territories, and the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation are subject to Israeli military law while the Israeli settlers living in the illegal settlements in the Palestinian territories are subject to a kinder Israeli civil law;

Whereas, almost 300,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem are "residents" without the rights of Israeli citizens and face insurmountable obstacles to buy or build homes and open businesses and face daily pressures to leave, while Israeli presence in East Jerusalem continues to expand;

Whereas, the unresolved conflict has resulted in war four times during the past 9 years between Israel and Gaza with Palestinians bearing the overwhelming costs in lives and property;

Whereas, the International Labor Organization (ILO), reports that the Israeli occupation and settlement activity have produced a generation of young Palestinians without work or hope;

Whereas, Israel's right to defend itself from rocket attacks and tunnels should not result in the collective punishment of the civilian population such as in 2014 where more than more than 2100 Palestinian civilians were killed, including 500 children and 250 women, and twenty thousand housing units were destroyed adding to a pre-existing shortage;

Whereas despite this ongoing tragedy, Israel remains the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign assistance since World War II to date having received **\$124.3 billion** in bilateral assistance that continues at the rate of **\$3.3 billion** per year;

Whereas, there is growing awareness that the world must act to help end this ongoing human rights tragedy and in this regard:

-UNI Global Unions, an international Labor organization to which many U.S. Unions belong endorsed the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) statement that reads as follows:

*"We denounce the occupation of Palestine by Israel, and will mobilize for a just and sustainable peace between Israel and Palestine, in accordance with the legitimacy of international law and in particular Resolutions 242 and 338 of the UN Security Council. We call for: An end to the construction of illegal Israeli settlements and removal of existing settlements; Israel's withdrawal from all Palestinian lands, in line with the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 1967 borders; and the dismantling of the Illegal separation wall. These demands will support equity, justice and the achievement of a comprehensive peace confirming the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of a free and independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital";*

-UNITE, the largest union in United Kingdom and Ireland, endorsed the **Boycott Divestment and Sanctions campaign** (BDS), specifically supporting the boycott of any goods produced from illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank; divestment from financial holdings in any companies, funds or organizations complicit in the ongoing illegal occupation and oppression of the Palestinian people; and sanctions against Israel for its continued illegal occupation, flouting of international law, and construction of an apartheid regime."

Whereas, a growing number of labor organizations have joined with global human rights groups to demand an end to the extreme oppression of Palestinians and sustained efforts to build a fair and lasting peace:

THEREFORE, CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO AND ITS AFFILIATES RESOLVE:

1. To request that the National AFL-CIO demand that our Government diligently apply all diplomatic and economic tools to bring an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine and to support a fair and just peace in which the people of Israel and Palestine can live in peace and security in accordance with International law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
2. To request that the National AFL-CIO adopt the strategy of Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) in connection with companies and investments profiting from or complicit in human rights violations arising from the occupation of the Palestinian Territories by the state of Israel, and to urge its affiliates and related pension and annuity funds to adopt similar strategies.
3. To work to oppose anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and all acts of racism, human rights violations and the exploitation of workers.