

Victorian Trades Hall Council

Motion:

[Note: Resolution passed 10 September 2010]

“Having received reports from the officers, the VTHC Executive Council notes with concern and disappointment the lack of meaningful progress between Israeli and Palestinian representatives in establishing a lasting peace. It is further noted that the situation seems to be worsening with detrimental consequences for working people and their families.

Council welcomes recent reports that negotiations will resume under the auspices of the United States.

In response to this crisis there has been a request from Palestinian unions and other progressive organisations for an international “Boycott Divestment and Sanctions Campaign” (BDS). The campaign was launched in 2005 and has had increasing international support.

The campaign demands are that the Israeli Government recognise the rights of the Palestinian people to self determination and that it comply with international law and United Nations resolutions.

In considering the situation the VTHC Executive Council believes that the “Global Boycott Divestment and Sanctions” campaign is one way the international community can contribute toward a peaceful resolution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

Therefore, the VTHC Executive Council determines to support this campaign, and as a first step, it will endorse and send representatives to the BDS Conference to be held in Melbourne on 29-31 October 2010.

Further, the VTHC Executive Council determines that the VTHC will:

- *promote this campaign within the community, work with unions and other organisations that support the campaign to maximise its effectiveness; and*
- *provide reports to Executive Council at 6 monthly intervals and will include information on the effectiveness of the campaign (Sis Halfpenny and Bro Cragg will be the responsible officers).*

In addition, the VTHC Executive Council affirms the important role that should be played in the peace process by Israeli and Palestinian unions and pledges whatever support we can to encourage meaningful dialogue between workers’ organisations.

The VTHC Executive Council further determines that this resolution will be conveyed to the Federal and State Parliamentary Labor Party, the Israeli Consulate and the Palestinian diplomatic mission, with an invitation for further discussions.

“The VTHC Executive Council also notes and endorses the ITF resolution passed in August 2010.”

Victorian Trades Hall Council

Secretary: Brian Boyd

Box 93 Trades Hall, 54 Victoria St, Carlton South VIC 3053 Australia

Tel. 03 9659 3511 Fax. 03 9663 2127 www.vthc.org.au

MOTION ON PALESTINE – INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FEDERATION

The 42nd International Transport Federation (ITF) Congress, meeting in Mexico City from 4 to 12 August 2010

1. NOTING the continued suffering of Palestinian workers as a result of Israeli occupation,
2. BELIEVES that the attacks launched in Gaza in December 2008 action, taken in response to rocket attacks, and the failure to respect the UN Security Council Resolution calling for a ceasefire were reckless and unacceptable, costing the lives of hundreds of innocent civilians,
3. CONGRATULATES the ITF for organizing immediate humanitarian relief convoys together with the Jordanian trade union movement and the ITF affiliates. And calls on the ITF to work together with the ITUC to launch a further international trade union relief initiative for Gaza,
4. WELCOMES the efforts made by the ITF to provide support to Palestinian General Federation of Transport Workers (PGUTW) to improve the daily working lives of Palestinian drivers facing delays and obstructions at west bank checkpoints which resulted in the creation of a joint liaison committee between the ITF affiliated Israeli and Palestinian transport workers' unions in 2007 which developed a drivers' helpline project which was due to be launched early in 2009,
5. NOTES that recent changes in the checkpoint situation led the PGUTW to request a review of the ITF project on the checkpoints,
6. Notes the visit to the west bank of the ITF General Secretary David Cockroft in November 2009 to review these developments, and to examine the difficult working conditions and lack of facilities for Palestinian drivers at the border crossing points with Israel. Notes the support of the ITF EB for the General Secretary's proposal for an ITF border crossing project.
7. EXPRESSES support for:
 - The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination;
 - Just settlement to the Palestinian refugee issue within the frame work of the UN resolutions.
 - The withdrawal of Israeli troops from all occupied territories;
 - The removal of the illegally constructed 'separation wall'.
8. CONDEMNS the continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank East Jerusalem and Gaza, the existence of illegal Israeli settlements there and calls for
 - The Congress to recognise that economic relations with the settlements help to sustain their existence, in violation of international law.
 - Congress condemns transport companies providing transport services to the settlements built on the occupied Palestinian territories since June, 1967, and calls on them to stop providing such services.

Calls on the ITF to take action against multinational transportation companies providing transportation to these settlements.

an immediate cessation of all illegal settlement building;

the immediate removal of all checkpoints restricting the free movement of people and transport within the occupied territories;

the dismantling of the “Separation Wall” which has led to the further taking of land from the Palestinian people and major transport disruption;

the opening of facilities to provide air, land and sea points of entry and exit for trade for the Palestinian people free from interference by the Israeli occupying power.

9. SUPPORTS a comprehensive peace between Israel and Palestine, based on the co-existence in conditions of security of two sovereign, independent and viable states and believes that the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 242, (1967), which recognises the 1967 borders, and 338 (1973), are fundamental to the achievement of a just and lasting peace.

10. CALLS for universal recognition of Israel’s right to exist, next to an independent viable Palestinian state, acknowledging that this is essential to achieving a peaceful solution.

11. CALLS for the lifting of the blockade on Gaza in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1860 (2009) and the opening of all Gaza ports, and for Israel to end the occupation of the West Bank and to remove all settlements. Congress recognises that economic relations with the settlements help to sustain their existence, in violation of international law and calls on the United Nations to request all member states to impose sanctions on any companies violating the 2004 ruling of the International Court of Justice decisions in respect of the Wall;

12. CONDEMNS the attack launched by Israeli armed forces on the humanitarian flotilla in June 2010 which led to the loss of lives and calls for a full international enquiry into the circumstances in which such an attack took place.

13. WELCOMES the statement made by the Israeli trade union confederation the Histadrut in June calling for the establishment of two independent democratic states.

14. SUPPORTS all international trade union efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza.

15. BELIEVES that while every country has the right to defend recognised borders and the lives and well-being of its population, the building by the Israeli government of a separation wall which intrudes substantially into Palestinian territory is a violation of international law which can only make peace and mutual coexistence harder to achieve. Congress calls for the wall to be removed, recognising that the mutual security of and respect between Israelis and Palestinians is central to the quest for peace.

16. Congress CALLS FOR an international campaign of solidarity with the Palestinian people by the ITF and all affiliates.

17. Congress INSTRUCTS the ITF Executive Board to continue to support its affiliate the PGUTW in every possible way and to take whatever action is appropriate to further the goals expressed in

this resolution including by promoting these policies within regional and international bodies including the International Trade Union Confederation.

The ITF motion was proposed by Nasser Younis of the Palestine General Union for Transport Workers, and seconded by Bob Crow of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers.