

# Support Palestine – Take Action

## Make your Branch and District an Apartheid Free Zone



The **INTO Palestine Ambassadors Group** was formed following a Resolution passed at Annual Congress 2022. The group consists of INTO members who have participated in Trade Union Friends of Palestine delegations to Palestine in the past and other union members with an interest in building Palestinian solidarity.

INTO members have for many years supported and built solidarity with the Palestinian people and have at several Annual Congresses endorsed the Irish Congress of Trade Unions call for Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) against the state of Israel.

The 2022 Resolution called on the CEC to declare INTO Head Office an Apartheid Free Zone (AFZ), and to encourage all branches to do likewise. This is in recognition of the fact that in March 2022, the United Nations Special Rapporteur, Michael Lynk declared Israel to be an apartheid state saying that the state of Israel “...intentionally and clearly prioritizes fundamental political, legal and social rights to one group over another, within the same geographic unit on the basis of one’s racial-national-ethnic identity” (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114702>)

Amnesty International, Israeli NGO B’Tselem and international NGO Human Rights Watch have all also declared Israel to be an apartheid state.

**We would like all INTO Branches and Districts to adopt the call in the 2022 Congress Motion and show Solidarity with the Palestinian people by declaring your Branch/District an Apartheid Free Zone.**

### What is an Apartheid Free Zone?

Declaring your Branch, District (or School) an Apartheid Free Zone (AFZ) is a tangible way to show your support for the Boycott Divestment Sanctions campaign against apartheid Israel and show solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The call for BDS has come from a broad range of Palestinian civil society organisations and has been endorsed by many Irish NGOs and civil society groups including ICTU and INTO. In November 2022, the Irish Anti Apartheid Campaign for Palestine was launched.

(<https://www.sadaka.ie/anti-apartheid-campaign/>)

The Irish Trade Union movement played a leading role in the boycott movement which eventually brought about an end to apartheid in South Africa. By declaring your Branch/District an AFZ, by saying that you will not purchase Israeli goods, you and your colleagues can play as important a role in ending apartheid in Israel and Palestine.

To contact the INTO Palestine Ambassadors Group—  
XXXXXXXXXX

### Congress 2022 Resolution

Congress:

a. notes

1. INTO policy to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in support of the rights of the Palestinian people; and

2. the current Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC) led calls for Irish organisations, including trade unions to declare themselves ‘Apartheid Free Zones’ (AFZs) in support of the BDS movement.

b. further notes and condemns the ongoing practice of apartheid, as recognised by Israeli NGO B’Tselem and the international organization Human Rights Watch by the State of Israel in Gaza, the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and within the State of Israel.

c. calls on the CEC to:

1. publicise its confirmed position on BDS on the INTO website and INTO publications;

2. report the actions taken by INTO in relation to this position since Congress 2018 at Congress 2023;

3. seek to give formal recognition of the group of members who have attended delegations to Palestine through the Trade Union Friends of Palestine in support of this policy position, as an official grouping within the INTO, to be known as the ‘INTO Palestine Ambassadors’ Group’;

4. have INTO Head Office declared an AFZ and register this action with the IPSC campaign; and

5. encourage INTO branches across Ireland to become AFZs.

Like all of us, you are no doubt horrified at the recent events in Gaza. INTO has issued a number of statements expressing solidarity with the people of Gaza, including these two

<https://www.into.ie/2023/10/17/school-communities-in-gaza-must-be-protected/>  
<https://www.into.ie/2023/11/17/into-joins-global-calls-for-ceasefire-in-middle-east/>

Both statements condemned the 7th October Hamas attack on Israeli civilians and “the killing of children, teachers and civilians in Gaza, the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel together with the destruction of vital infrastructure including schools”, and called for an immediate ceasefire. INTO also endorsed similar statements from Education International and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. At its November meeting the CEC decided to make a significant humanitarian donation to UNICEF who work directly with children on the ground in Palestine. INTO members have participated in Solidarity With Gaza demonstrations across the country.

In addition, the INTO Palestine Ambassadors Group wrote to the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs on 1<sup>st</sup> November in relation to ongoing illegal Israeli settler violence against Palestinian communities in the West Bank. We called on Minister Martin to publicly condemn the cooperation of the Israeli authorities in this ongoing violence, seek public condemnation of the violence from the Israeli ambassador and seek a full investigation of all murders and acts of violence in the West Bank.

### **What we would like your District and Branches to do**

#### **1. Declare your District and Branches an Apartheid Free Zone.**

Please have a motion passed at District meeting and have motions brought to your January Branch AGMs to this effect. Suggested wording -

***“XXXXX Branch/District endorses INTO policy on supporting the Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) Movement in support of the rights of the Palestinian people and declaring trade union branches Apartheid Free Zones in support of BDS, as passed at INTO Congress 2022.***

***To this end XXXXXXXX Branch/District agrees to (i) become an Apartheid Free Zone (ii) publicise this decision among Branch members (iii) encourage all members to do everything they can to support the BDS movement (iv) encourage all staff reps to discuss with their colleagues the idea of writing to their individual BOMs to seek that their schools become AFZs (v) make a donation to support humanitarian aid and relief to Palestinians.”***

#### **2. Communicate this decision to all your members, asking them to support the people of Palestine by refusing to purchase Israeli products.**

Many international companies profit from helping Israel to maintain its system of apartheid and colonialism. Many of these are listed here -

<https://bdsmovement.net/news/urgent-action-alert-for-meaningful-support-for-palestinians>  
<https://bdsmovement.net/Act-Now-Against-These-Companies-Profiting-From-Genocide?s=08>



Immediate examples relevant to many of us include

HP (<https://bdsmovement.net/boycott-hp> )

AXA (<https://bdsmovement.net/axa-divest> )

Puma (<https://bdsmovement.net/boycott-puma> )

Where our members can do so in their schools, they should ask their Boards of Management and school authorities to refuse to deal with companies complicit in Israeli apartheid.

#### **3. Write to the Irish government asking them to pass the stalled Occupied Territories Bill** which would ban trade between Ireland and Israel’s illegal settlements in the West Bank (find more information here - <https://www.sadaka.ie/the-occupied-territories-bill/> )

#### **4. Support all official protests called to show Solidarity with the people of Palestine**, to demand an immediate ceasefire in the current hostilities, to demand the allowing of humanitarian aid in to the besieged people of Gaza and to end the occupation of Gaza. Encourage all the members of your District and Branches to support and attend such protests.

#### **5. Make a financial donation to support humanitarian aid and relief to Palestinians**

Encourage your members to refuse to buy Israeli produce when doing their personal shopping.

The Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign has information about the consumer boycott of Israeli products at <https://www.ipsc.ie/campaigns/consumer-boycott>

