

UK Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee: For solidarity action with Palestinian workers to shut down Israel's war machine

Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (UK)

8 November 2023

We urge all postal workers in the UK to take up the call made by the Palestinian trade unions for solidarity action to stop the genocide unleashed by the Israeli military in Gaza.

The urgent appeal to stop the Israeli war machine, made three weeks ago, has been ignored by Communication Workers Union leaders Dave Ward and Andy Furey and the leadership of all the trade unions in the UK. This has allowed one atrocity after another to be committed before the eyes of the world, butchering thousands of civilians and turning Gaza into what the United Nations called “a graveyard for children.”

We urge postal workers to act independently of the union bureaucrats prepared to stand by in the face of mass murder. Our committee brought the call for solidarity action to the attention of postal workers as soon as it was issued.

The open letter from the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions and 31 other workers' organisations calls on workers to refuse to build and transport weapons bound for Israel. We should add to this a refusal by postal workers to deliver mail to government and civil service departments and companies involved in the arms trade.

The Sunak government and the Labour Party led by Keir Starmer are as one in defending violations of international law and sanctioning war crimes, combined with making threats against those protesting the atrocities.

The Netanyahu government and Israeli military could not function without the supply of military equipment

from their powerful backers, including the British government. BAE systems provides up to 15 percent of parts for the American-made Lockheed Martin F35 stealth fighter jets raining death on defenceless civilians in Gaza.

Unite the union, led by Sharon Graham, represents workers in the arms industry and on the docks. But no action has been taken to halt the trade in mass murder as the British government continues to license the export of components to the US, the main sponsor and supplier of the Israeli war machine.

The explosive force of the bombs dropped on the tiny Gaza Strip equates to twice that of the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima. But aside from issuing pro-forma appeals to the war criminals in the Tory Party to back a ceasefire, the unions have done nothing.

Some reports and publications have cited a protest on October 26 in Kent at the gates of Instro Precision, a subsidiary of major Israeli arms manufacturer Elbit Systems, as an action by the trade unions. It was not. It involved 150 members of Unite and other trade unions taking a principled stand but was not called by the leadership of the trade unions who are refusing to organise industrial action against the purveyors of death.

The Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union led by Mick Lynch has not lifted a finger to prevent the Sunak government sending its own members on two Royal Auxiliary Fleet vessels to support Israel's siege of Gaza and accompany British and American warships in the region.

Millions of workers and youth around the globe have

turned out to demonstrate against the Israeli regime and all the governments of the US-NATO axis complicit in the genocidal war. These protests are of an international character and include many Jewish protestors stating, “Never again for anyone”, drawing a connection between the Holocaust and the genocide facing Palestinians.

But this fight must now be taken onto the industrial front by the international working class, the most powerful force in the world, able to paralyse the economy and bring down warmongering governments.

The call of the Palestinian trade unions for industrial action to stop the shipment of weapons to Israel has been taken up by airport workers in Belgium and dock workers on the US West Coast and in Spain. This lead must be followed. Calls by Palestinian and peace groups for international action by workers to “Shut it Down for Palestine”, beginning November 9, should be supported. But the success of such initiatives requires the mobilisation of the rank-and-file against the dead hand of the union bureaucracy.

Stoppages and job actions to paralyse the Israeli military and their suppliers pose the need for a wider struggle for a political general strike.

In response to the outpouring of support for the Palestinians, governments in the UK, US and Europe have doubled down on their support for the Israeli war machine and are threatening to ban protests and criminalise opposition to Israel’s mass murder and ethnic cleansing. The trade unions have not issued any condemnation of this clampdown on basic rights. Neither has there been any commitment to take industrial action in defence of any worker faced with victimisation for speaking out in solidarity with Palestine, such as the London Underground driver.

This must be fought by workers who know that “An injury to one is an injury to all.” No gagging of free speech for workers speaking out against the criminal Sunak government! The inaction of the trade unions has emboldened the Tory government to proceed with moves for a blanket ban on protests. A national demonstration for a ceasefire in Gaza is denounced as “obscene” on Armistice Day by the warmongers supporting the mass murder of Palestinians!

Solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and sisters must come from below through the organisation of rank-and-file committees in every union and every

workplace. The fight against the sellout by the trade unions of the strike wave of two million workers since last summer, including at Royal Mail with real terms pay cuts, job losses and brutal restructuring, must be joined with opposition to the homicidal war in Gaza.

All military equipment, weapons and parts destined for Israel from the UK must be identified, with plans made to stop their export. The rank and file must take the lead and co-ordinate the action of workers across industries and national borders. To help organise this counter-offensive, contact the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee today.



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