

Letter from general secretary of the New Unions, Palestine.

I, as the general secretary of the Palestine New Federation of Trade Unions, and on behalf of the 20, 000 men and women workers we unionized over the course of 12 years since the creation of the New Unions in 2010, salute friends and supporters of Palestine in Sheffield and the UK at large.

This anti-apartheid conference you're holding to intensify solidarity actions with our workers and people and answer Palestinian calls to hold apartheid Israel accountable comes at a critical moment of our anti-colonial struggle. Since the start of 2022, the Israeli colonial apartheid regime has escalated its violence against our workers and people. So far, since the start of the year, the Israeli forces killed more than 190 Palestinians, including tens of children. Among those who were killed was a Palestinian worker who was trying to get to work in Israel through one of the open parts of the Wall. He was shot, injured and then died of his injuries earlier this month.

Settler violence, under the protection of the Israeli army has also increased. On November 19, 30, 000 Israeli settlers invaded the Old City of Hebron, intimidated and abused Palestinians living there. Apartheid Israel has also intensified its ethnic cleansing actions mainly in Masafer Yatta, where the residents of 8 villages classified as a closed military area are threatened by imminent forcible expulsion.

Taking over our land along with our natural resources only increases the strangulation of the Palestinian economy and its dependence on the Israeli one. This forces more and more Palestinians to work for Israeli corporations as cheap wagger laborers.

Israeli control over our labor force is increasing. This undermines our efforts to build a national economy independent of colonialism and the associated neoliberal capitalist regime with it. As a result, Palestinian workers continue to suffer from discrimination in wages and social rights in the Israeli labour market, oppression and humiliation and abuse at the military checkpoints designated for workers ghettoized behind the Apartheid Wall, persecution, murder, arrest, and the worst forms of slavery and exploitation by permit brokers and Israeli employers.

International complicity and failure to hold apartheid Israel accountable for its crimes against our people and workers is what enables Israel to continue committing more crimes with full impunity. However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been widely condemned by the world, particularly by the West. These double standards, where Ukrainian peoples' lives are seen more valued than Palestinian lives are humiliating and painful to us. They only show the hypocrisy of the West, which preaches human rights and democracy to the rest of the world.

Nonetheless, nothing shakes our trust in people of conscious, organizations and trade unions in the UK. We continue to count on you to support the BDS call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, which is supported by the Palestinian people and by our workers. We also call on you

to open up more spaces for Palestinian trade unions, particularly progressive ones like the New Unions to raise awareness about our workers' struggle. Last but not least, we call on you to fight the Histadrut, Israel's trade union, established for the sole aim of colonizing Palestine, and hold it accountable.

Mohammed Blaidi