

International**MOTIONS ON NOTICE
NTEU NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING 2022****NTEU Position on Palestine**

The NTEU recognises and builds upon the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Palestinian solidarity in their struggles against settler-colonial violence. This spirit of solidarity is a central pillar of trade unionism. As academic institutions have caused harm to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, so too do they cause harm to Palestinian people. The NTEU stands against settler-colonial violence and land theft in Australia, Palestine, and everywhere.

In recent years, several leading international human rights organisations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the International Commission of Jurists, have confirmed what Palestinian academics have said for decades: Israel is committing the crime of apartheid, as defined by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. This finding is echoed by the International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School, Israel-based human rights organisations B'Tselem and Yesh Din, as well as the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories.

The NTEU recognises the urgency of international solidarity in ending the apartheid system and settler-colonial control to which Israel has subjected Palestinians for more than seven decades.

Israeli academic institutions are complicit in the violation of Palestinian rights through—but not limited to—financial ties and collaboration with the Israeli army and arms manufacturers.

On the other hand, Palestinian access to education, free expression, and academic participation is severely restricted by apartheid, colonialism, and ongoing violence against Palestinian students, academics, and institutions.

In March of this year, Birzeit University issued a call to action against Israeli policy that imposes suffocating conditions on international faculty and students at Palestinian universities. Israel restricts hiring and intake of international faculty and students at Palestinian universities at 100 staff and 150 students per year. Israel also limits employment of international faculty to five non-consecutive years, thereby denying sustainable hiring and promotion of faculty.

Moreover, Israel sets arbitrary restrictions on which disciplines may be taught and studied by international faculty and students and requires international applicants to undergo interrogation at an Israeli diplomatic mission in their country of origin. This is a bald-faced attack on academic freedom which the NTEU condemns unequivocally.

In order to counter these severe violations of human rights and deprivation of academic freedom, Palestinians have called for non-violent global solidarity action in the form of boycott, divestment, and sanctions upon the State of Israel, until it recognises the rights of Palestinian people to self-determination and fully complies with international law.

The NTEU notes that in 2005, 173 Palestinian civil society organisations, including our colleagues and comrades in the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, the Federation of Unions of Palestinian Universities' Professors and Employees, the General Union of Palestinian Women, and the General Union of Palestinian Teachers, issued a call to academics worldwide to boycott Israeli universities until such time as these basic prerequisites for justice were achieved.

The NTEU is also concerned that academics, students, and university staff who engage in critical scholarship of Israel, or who express support for Palestinian justice, have been subject to censure, deplatforming, and disciplinary action.

The NTEU believes that adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism at Australian universities should be opposed, as it would chill free speech, restrict academic freedom, and restrict peaceful political expression. The NTEU agrees with concerns, articulated by more than 40 Jewish organisations and numerous academics in Australia and worldwide, that this definition is worded in a way that conflates legitimate criticism of Israel with antisemitism. The NTEU opposes antisemitism and all prejudice in the strongest terms and will consult with Jewish academics and community organisations to determine how to address and counter antisemitism at universities.

The NTEU stands in solidarity with the people of Palestine in their ongoing struggle against ethnic cleansing and apartheid. As trade unionists and people of conscience, we must bring our power to bear on the structures that enable this oppression.

The NTEU will:

1. Seek to strengthen ties with Palestinian unions, including the Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees.
2. Prohibit elected officials or staff of the NTEU from accepting expenses-paid tours to Israel that are sponsored by the Israeli state or pro-Israel lobby organisations.
3. Oppose the adoption of policies that prohibit criticism of Israel by any Australian academic institution, including the IHRA definition of antisemitism.
4. Support the right of NTEU members to engage in boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) actions that seek to end the occupation of Palestine.
5. Contribute \$2,000 to the organisation of the next Black-Palestinian Solidarity Conference, to be held in late 2023.
6. Call upon members to participate in active solidarity with Palestinians.

MOVED: (David Gonzalez - UniMelb Branch)

SECONDED: (Andrew Tjea -ECU Branch)