

More unions' condemn Israel attack on the Freegaza Flotilla

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Swedish union workers will block Israëli ships for a week

Saturday 5 June 2010 by siawi2

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/sweden-ports-to-block-israel-ships-goods-in-response-to-gaza-flotilla-takeover-1.294295>

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Sweden ports to block Israel ships, goods in response to Gaza flotilla takeover

Week-long ban is initiated by Swedish Port Workers Union, who says act is reaction to the 'unprecedented criminal attack on the peaceful ship convoy.'

By The Associated Press and DPA

Swedish dockworkers will launch a weeklong blockade of Israeli ships and goods arriving in the Nordic nation to protest Monday's attack on a Gaza-destined aid flotilla.

Nine activists died after Israeli troops intercepted the convoy.

Swedish Port Workers Union spokesman Peter Annerback says workers will refuse to handle Israeli goods and ships during the June 15-24 blockade. The union has some 1,500 members and supports Ship to Gaza, which took part in the flotilla.

It says the reason for the blockade is "the unprecedented criminal attack on the peaceful ship convoy."

It was unclear Saturday how much the blockade would affect trade between the two countries since the union still needs to identify cargos with Israeli origin.

UK

Britain's largest union, Unite, unanimously votes to boycott Israel

Source: *The Jewish Chronicle*, June 4, 2010

<http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/32579/unite-votes-boycott-israel>

By Jonathan Kalmus

Britain's largest union, Unite, has unanimously passed a motion to boycott Israeli companies at its first policy conference in Manchester on Wednesday.

The motion, which passed unanimously, called the union "to vigorously promote a policy of divestment from Israeli companies", while a boycott of Israeli goods and services will be "similar to the boycott of South African goods during the era of apartheid".

Reflecting the University and College Union's call at their Manchester conference earlier in the week, Unite will similarly host a "Palestine conference" to support trade union action against Israel.

But at odds with the UCU's call to sever links with Israel's trade union movement Histadrut, Unite delegates voted to keep solidarity links. Stephen Scott, director of Trade Union Friends of Israel, said that indicates a split within the pro-boycott movement, many of whom realise such a call "is all very dangerous stuff." It would be huge for another trade union movement to expel them even when they are a democratic organisation and pass all the criteria of being a member of the international trade unions. "Nevertheless, Mr Scott added: "All round, you now have a major player supporting the boycott and the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign, and there is no resistance."

Australia

In the wake of the murderous Israeli commando attack on an unarmed aid flotilla to Gaza on May 31, more trade unions in Australia are joining the Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions campaign against Israel. Here Andrew Ferguson, the NSW Secretary of the Construction, Forestry, Mining & Energy Union (CFMEU) addresses the Sydney June 5, 2010 Gaza solidarity rally. He is introduced by Pip Hinman of the Stop The War Coalition:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxeluDkAJWA>

SOUTH AFRICA

COSATU condemns Israeli state piracy

May 31, 2010 — The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is outraged at the murder by Israeli commandos' of at least 20 people — and injuries to a further 60 — as a result of their armed attack on a convoy of ships carrying aid to the people of Gaza last night.

COSATU sends its condolences to the families and friends of those who lost their lives and calls upon the people of the world to condemn this act of Israeli state-sponsored piracy.

The six-ship flotilla, with 750 Palestine solidarity activists from around the world on board and carrying 10,000 tonnes of aid for the people of Gaza, left Cyprus on Sunday and had been due to arrive in Gaza today.

Then, when it was about 64 km out to sea, in international waters, Israeli armed forces boarded the largest vessel and fought with those on board. The activists say Israeli troops came on board shooting. Israel is now reported to be towing the boats to the port of Ashdod and says it will deport the passengers from there.

The ships were bringing the people of Gaza 10,000 tonnes of badly needed concrete, toys, workbooks, chocolate, pasta and substantial medical supplies. It was acting in accordance with international law.

COSATU fully supports the call on the international community to pressure their governments to condemn this brutal deed and hold Israel accountable for the murder of foreign civilians at sea and illegal piracy of civilian vessels carrying humanitarian aid.

The federation welcomes the decision by the government of Spain and Sweden to withdraw their ambassadors from Israel and calls upon the South African government to follow their lead.

The flotilla was an international response to the plight of the people of Gaza, following Israel's closure of the border. Amnesty International in their Annual Human Rights Report concluded that the siege has "deepened the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Mass unemployment, extreme poverty, food insecurity and food price rises caused by shortages left four out of five Gazans dependent on humanitarian aid. The scope of the blockade and statements made by Israeli officials about its purpose showed that it was being imposed as a form of collective punishment of Gazans, a flagrant violation of international law."

The United Nations has continuously stated that only a fraction of the required aid is entering Gaza due to what it calls "the medieval siege". John Ging, the director of UNRWA in Gaza, has specifically expressed the need for the flotilla to enter Gaza.

The European Union's new foreign affairs minister, Catherine Ashton, has just reiterated its call for, "an immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza".

COSATU also calls for greater support for the international boycott, divestment and sanction campaign against Israel, which is proving again to be violent and ruthless in attacking and murdering those who stand in its way. We urge all South Africans to refuse to buy or handle any goods from Israel or have any dealings with Israeli businesses.

COSATU reaffirms its support of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to national sovereignty and the same human rights as any other people. We demand the immediate end to the

Israeli siege and the illegal occupation of the sovereign territory which has been violently seized from the Palestinian nation.

Issued by Patrick Craven (national spokesperson), Congress of South African Trade Unions.

NUM condemns Israel, calls for independent inquiry

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) is enraged by the callous and murderous actions of the Israeli naval commandos when they raided a Turkish led international humanitarian envoy to the Israeli blockaded Hamas ruled Gaza Palestinian territory. The pro-Palestinian flotilla led boat, the Turkish Marmora, with 600 mixed nationals activists aboard, was violently intercepted by the Israeli commandos resulting in the death of 19 reported deaths.

The NUM is concerned that the latest action of the state of Israel threatens the peace process and the realization of a two state solution to the Israeli - Palestine conflict. These callous and barbaric actions amount to a violation of international law because the incident took place 80 miles out to sea in international waters and has increased tensions and threats of armed retaliatory conflict along the Mediterranean peninsula.

While the NUM supports the UN Security Council's call for Israel to conduct a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation of the flotilla incident and condemning of the Israeli acts of violence and the immediate release of ships and civilians held by Israel , we do not believe that Israel is capable to conduct such an investigation. We instead call for an international, independent inquiry under the auspices of a United Nations agency and a consideration for sanctions to be imposed against Israel upon an adverse finding of the investigation against Israel .

"We applaud the bold diplomatic action by Spain to recall its ambassador and call upon nation states to do the same as a sign of protest against the action of the Israeli State . We also call upon the international community to demand the lifting of the blockade" says Senzeni Zokwana , the NUM President and President of the 20 million member International Chemical, Energy, Mining and General Workers Union (ICEM).

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