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| International Trade Union Confederation  BELGIUM   Att: Luc Triangle |  Oslo, 17.11.2023Our ref. 23/114-31840.100/ELFAYour ref.   |

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Dear Luc Triangle,

The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions is alarmed by the horrors unfolding in Gaza. We are appalled by the attacks on Israel, and we are deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in the occupied West Bank.

An occupying power has a duty and obligation to protect the civilian population. What we are witnessing now is a collective punishment of the entire population in Gaza. Several days ago, the UN Secretary General said that Gaza is becoming a “graveyard for children”. UN agencies have issued an urgent call for international action to end the ongoing attacks on hospitals. Five weeks into the war, more UN aid workers had been killed in Gaza than in any other single conflict in the organization’s 78-year history. We are witnessing a collapse of Western morality, a lack of respect for International Humanitarian Law, and what appears to be war crimes. The trust between the global North and South is deteriorating by the day. Yet, the ITUC is almost silent. We urge you to speak up loud and clear.

 We call on the ITUC to urgently demand a cease-fire; to call for de-escalation of the war by securing the immediate release of the Israeli hostages and arbitrarily detained Palestinians; the restoration of water, fuel, electricity, and other basic services; and the passage of adequate humanitarian aid.

The war is not only a regional issue but also a matter that resonates with the most fundamental principles of international law, humanitarian law, human rights, and democracy globally.

Peace is at the heart of ITUC`s values. The same are the principles of the United Nations and the importance of holding to account those who are responsible for initiating and sustaining wars and for committing war crimes as well as terrorist attacks. While the primary responsibility for ensuring compliance with international law, humanitarian law and human rights rests with governments, significant progress has been made in ensuring supply chain due diligence.

UN Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) calls on Israel to “immediately and completely cease all settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem” and to “fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard.” In its advisory opinion on legal consequences of the construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (2003), the International Court of Justice (ICJ) pointed out that all States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention were under an obligation, while respecting the Charter and international law, to ensure compliance by Israel with international humanitarian law as embodied in that Convention.

 Hence, businesses and corporations that are directly or indirectly involved in the Israeli settlement project run a high risk of involvement in grave violations of international humanitarian law, complicity in war crimes and crimes against humanity, and contributing to human rights violations. This includes financing, insuring, and trading with partners, suppliers, and subsidiaries that have ties with and proven links to the construction, expansion, and maintenance of Israel’s illegal settlements. Such a risk is not limited to production and trade relationships but extends to financial institutions as well.

LO-Norway refers to the ITUC`s Congress statement which is stressing that it is necessary to use all available and effective national and international mechanisms to ensure corporate accountability.

We ask that ITUC follows up the congress statement`s request to work with the GUFs to advance due diligence and seek binding regulation to ensure that companies respect human and labour rights and respond appropriately to violations.

LO-Norway suggests that the ITUC take immediate action for a global mobilisation to:

* Raise awareness on the importance of heightened human rights due diligence related to conflict-affected areas.
* Support and coordinate the growing number of workers` initiatives to hold Israel to account for its violations of international law associated with the illegal settlements.
* Encourage the ITUC affiliates to lobby their governments to call for the UN High Commissioner to update the database of businesses involved in the illegal Israeli settlements, as required by resolution 31/36 and to provide the necessary resources.

ITUC`s Congress statement clearly states that corporations must be held responsible for their entire supply chains and held to account when they or their suppliers or other business partners are involved in business activities that violate rights.

For 150 years unions have driven social and economic progress through collective action, ensuring a countervailing force against exploitation, greed, and discrimination.

At the congress in Melbourne, we stressed the need to put the economy in the service of humankind and save people and the planet from the threat of destruction.

 We urge the International Trade Union Confederation to take a stand against the blatant violation of the right to life in Gaza and take a clear stand against the encroachments on civil liberties, such as the right to free speech and assembly, that we now see in many countries as people take sides in the war. We must not sacrifice our values in fear of dissent. At our Congress in Melbourne 2022, we pledged unwavering support for democracy and self-determination.

Our voice and action in this matter can significantly influence public discourse and policy, ensuring that the values of freedom, equality, and solidarity remain at the heart of our societies also in times of crisis.

I am hopeful that you will consider these concerns and take appropriate measures to address them. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Yours sincerely

**LO NORWAY**

Peggy Hessen Følsvik

President

*(Sig.)*

*An electronic signature has the same legal effect and enforceability as a written signature.*