

ACTU calls for an urgent ceasefire in Israel and Palestine

The ACTU condemns the bombing, killing and kidnapping of Israeli civilians by the terrorist organisation Hamas on 7 October. This action is totally reprehensible and all hostages must be released immediately and Hamas must be held accountable. Hamas does not represent the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

The Australian Union movement is gravely concerned at the escalation of violence between Israel and Hamas, following the attacks launched against Israel from Gaza on 7 October.

In response to the Hamas attack, Israel has launched an unrelenting bombing campaign against the densely-populated Gaza; shut off Gaza from basic supplies of food, water, electricity and medicine; and ordered 1.1 million people to evacuate. This has created an urgent humanitarian crisis for Palestinians – with basic necessities running out and fears people are beginning to die of dehydration.

The ACTU condemns attacks on civilians, with over 1,300 Israelis and over 3,000 Palestinians killed, including more than 1000 children, since October 7.

The ACTU joins the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in calling for all sides, and the international community, to act for peace. There must be an immediate de-escalation and ceasefire, and the creation of humanitarian corridors to allow humanitarian aid into Palestine unimpeded. Civilians must be protected, and civilian infrastructure such as hospitals must not be targeted. UN Human Rights Expert Francesca Albanese has stated ‘the United Nations and its Member States must intensify efforts to mediate an immediate ceasefire between the parties, before we reach a point of no return’.

We welcome the \$10 million aid package for Palestine announced by the Australian Government on 14 October. Humanitarian needs for food, water, medical supplies and shelter are rapidly escalating and Australia will need to commit further assistance.

The ACTU calls on the Australian Government to exercise all avenues of diplomacy to stop the bombing and the ground assault by Israel into Gaza and call for an immediate ceasefire.

We reiterate the Australian union movement’s strong opposition to war, violence, and racism, including antisemitism and islamophobia.

This latest escalation is part of a decades-long conflict that must be brought to a just outcome through dialogue and respect for international law, including human rights.

The ACTU calls for an end to the occupation of Palestine and a just and sustainable peace in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions. Including the removal of illegal settlements, the withdrawal of Israel from all Palestinian lands along with the dismantling of the separation wall. In line with the ACTU’s commitment to a two-state solution with the security of borders for both nations, we call on all countries to recognise, without delay, Palestine as a sovereign state with East Jerusalem as its capital. This will confirm the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in a free and independent Palestine.

The Australian Union movement stands in solidarity with the Israeli and Palestinian victims of violence and calls for an immediate ceasefire.