

## NZNO statement on Palestine-Israel conflict

17 November 2023

NZNO Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa is gravely concerned by the escalating loss of life among health care workers and other civilians in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories since 7 October 2023.

Official reports from Gaza and Israel say 11,078 Palestinians and around 1200 people in Israel have been killed. The number of Palestinian casualties does not include persons still missing, and has not been updated in Gaza since 10 November. As many as 4506 Palestinian children and 31 Israeli children are among the dead. An unknown number have also died due to the destruction of Gaza's public health infrastructure and denial of the necessities of life.

We are appalled by the current military action at Al Shifa Hospital. While patients and health workers still remain in Al Shifa without safe medical evacuation options it remains a hospital with protection under International Humanitarian Law.

We are further appalled by the 250 previous attacks on health care in Gaza and the West Bank – on hospitals, clinics, patients and ambulances – which have been verified by the World Health Organization.<sup>1</sup> At least 198 health workers have been killed in Gaza since 7 October, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.<sup>2</sup>

Although there are no reported casualties, we are also concerned about the 25 attacks on health care in Israel.

NZNO extends solidarity with health workers anywhere.

NZNO commits to health equity.<sup>3</sup> We recognise that different people with different levels of advantage require different approaches and resources to get equitable health outcomes.

NZNO stands with people aspiring for freedom from colonisation.

For these reasons, we endorse the letter sent to the Prime Minister by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions Te Kauae Kaimahi on 31 October 2023,<sup>4</sup> urging the New Zealand Government to use its full diplomatic weight to continuously call for:

1 Ghebreyesus, Tedros Adhanom. 2023, 10 November. 'WHO Director-General's remarks at the Emergency Meeting of the United Nations Security Council', Retrieved from

<https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-remarks-at-the-emergency-meeting-of-the-united-nations-security-council---10-november-2023>

2 OCHAOPT. 2023, 14 November. 'Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel - reported impact | Day 40'. Retrieved from <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-40>

3 NZNO. 2021. 'Equity matters – Kia tū te ēritetanga'. Retrieved from [https://www.nzno.org.nz/resources/equity\\_matters](https://www.nzno.org.nz/resources/equity_matters)

4 NZCTU Te Kauae Kaimahi. 2023, 31 October. 'Urgent action required to end attacks on civilians in Gaza'. Retrieved from <https://union.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/NZCTU-Letter-to-the-Prime-Minister-re.-the-conflict-in-Palestine-Israel-October-2023.pdf>



- an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, and the withdrawal of the Israel Defence Forces from all Palestinian territories
- an immediate end to the siege of Gaza, and the admission of all necessary humanitarian aid, including water, food, medical equipment, and fuel
- the protection of all civilians, including the immediate return of all hostages, and the upholding of international law
- an International Criminal Court investigation into the possible crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes committed by the state of Israel, Hamas, and other parties to the conflict
- a solution to the conflict that recognises and enables the Palestinian people's inalienable rights to self-determination and sovereignty.

In addition, we are concerned by reports from Te Kāhui Tika Tangata the Human Rights Commission that extremely offensive anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are increasing within Aotearoa as a result of the war in Gaza.<sup>5</sup> NZNO does not tolerate any form of racism or discrimination.

We invite those NZNO members who wish to demonstrate their support for this statement to take part in peaceful protests calling for an immediate ceasefire.

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<sup>5</sup> Hunt, Paul. 2023, November 15. 'NZ's social cohesion in jeopardy as Israel-Gaza conflict unfolds', *The Post Te Upoko o Te Ika*. Retrieved from <https://www.thepost.co.nz/nz-news/350110253/nzs-social-cohesion-jeopardy-israel-gaza-conflict-unfolds>