



17 September 2018

**Message of support by Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (SA) to the 13<sup>th</sup> COSATU National Congress**

To the National Office Bearers of COSATU,

The leadership of its affiliates and its membership,

International guests,

Members of sister international solidarity organisations,

Receive very warm revolutionary greetings from the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel in South Africa.

The 13<sup>th</sup> COSATU National Congress convenes at a time when the situation in Palestine and for Palestinians has gotten far worse than it has ever been. In July, Israel approved the Nation State law, the law unambiguously defines Israel as a state that belongs exclusively to the Jewish people, and addresses the question of self-determination only for the Jewish people, this is despite the fact that one in five citizens of Israel is an indigenous, non-Jewish Palestinian.

Adalah, a leading Palestinian human rights organization in Israel, explains how the law “affirms the principle of apartheid in housing, land and citizenship.” It concludes that “this law constitutionally sanctions institutionalized discrimination.”

Israel has over 50 racist laws that discriminate against the indigenous Palestinians, including some laws that fit the UN definition of apartheid. The Nation State Law is Israel effectively declaring itself an apartheid state. By Israel’s own admission it is now openly practising apartheid, there is no greater time than now to intensify the campaign to boycott, divest and impose sanctions against Israel until it respects international law.

Palestinian workers often bear the brunt of Israel’s efforts to undermine the Palestinian economy and its regime of occupation, apartheid and settler colonialism. The Palestinian trade union movement has always played a key role in the Palestinian struggle. In 2011, Palestinian trade unions formed the Palestinian Trade Union Coalition for BDS (PTUC-BDS), they further issued an appeal for the international trade union movement to join the BDS movement.

Since the call for the international campaign for BDS was issued by the overwhelming majority of Palestinians in 2005, the international trade union movement has supported this non-violent campaign. COSATU was among the very first international trade union federations to support the BDS call and join the movement. Many other trade unions across the world have done the same: CUT in Brazil, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the UK Trade Union Congress, Belgian federation ABVV/FGTB, French unions CNT and CGT Educ'Action, the LO federation in Norway, the Canadian Postal Workers Union, among many others.

BDS SA commends COSATU and its affiliates for their continued practical support and involvement in the BDS movement. Throughout the years COSATU and its affiliates have been involved in the annual international Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) campaign; the campaign for the academic and cultural boycott of Israel; the dock workers campaign to stop Israeli products and many other actions. We continued to be inspired by the working-class internationalism demonstrated by South African workers in general.

We wish COSATU well in its congress, we look forward to the outcomes of the congress. We hope that in your engagements workers can consider the following issues:

1. How to ensure that the 54<sup>th</sup> ANC Congress resolution to immediately and unconditionally downgrade the South African Embassy in Israel to a liaison office is translated into government policy.
2. In light of the worsening situation in Palestine and the attempts by the Israeli regime to penetrate onto the African continent, how can the trade union movement in South Africa and the rest of the continent intensify the boycott, divestments and sanctions campaign

Yours in international solidarity.

On behalf of BDS South Africa  
Kwara Kekana  
National Spokesperson

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