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International solidarity - a trade union issue

Internationalism is at the core of our movement. This fundamental work is inspired by our members' commitment to global justice.

Trade unionists are often asked why they focus on fighting for people's labour and human rights in other countries, rather than sticking to issues at home.

EXPLAINER: WHY IT'S A TRADE UNION ISSUE

Internationalism proudly sits at the very heart of the trade union movement and PCS is no different. This fundamental work is inspired by our members' commitment to global justice. Why focus on faraway countries and not on bread-and-butter issues in our own countries or workplaces?

There are two responses to this:

- "An injury to one is an injury to all." International issues are never irrelevant to trade unionists; they are our bread and butter too. If we oppose injustice and oppression at home, we oppose it everywhere.
- It never detracts from the fight on issues like pay, pensions and jobs. International solidarity and domestic industrial issues go hand in hand.

Building links

Our international work springs from policy that is agreed by members at our annual conference. It's overseen by our international committee, which meets monthly.

PCS aims to oppose oppression, and to fight for and defend trade union, labour and general human rights across a number of countries and regions. We have links with other unions across the world and we support civil society and solidarity campaigns. For example, PCS is affiliated to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign. We have had speakers at events across the UK, and mobilise members to attend solidarity demonstrations.

Throughout history, trade unionists have been targeted by governments for their commitment to trade union and human rights. When those rights are at stake overseas, PCS defends them. That's why we give our support to worker movements struggling against oppression, from Palestine to Ukraine to Colombia and Cuba.

How can you take action?

Every collective act sends a message to those who are suffering that we are with them.

For example:

- As part of the Stop the War Coalition's Workplace Day of Action to Stand with Gaza, PCS members attended UK-wide workplace protests in early 2024.
- PCS conference in 2023 agreed to send a delegation to Ukraine, which visited in November to meet trade unionists, visit workplaces and help deliver aid. This solidarity started with discussions between members about how the Russian invasion was affecting Ukrainian people.
- PCS co-planned a conference on Myanmar, following a motion to conference in 2023.

All members, branches and groups can – through PCS's democratic structures – raise their voice in solidarity with oppressed peoples.