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Stepping up the campaign for freedom, equality and justice for Palestine

It is our duty as trade unionists and activists in the UK to step up our solidarity, for freedom, equality and justice for the Palestinian people, a TUC fringe meeting heard.

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign event in Brighton last night (10) heard from PCS chair Louise Regan, who chaired the meeting, how Palestinian society is currently facing its most horrific challenge.

Israel's genocidal assault has killed many tens of thousands and displaced more than 85% of Gaza's population.

Solidarity

PCS General Secretary Fran Heathcote told the meeting that PCS is proud to support the PSC and will continue to campaign for an end to the killing, an end to occupation, the dismantling of the settlements and a free and independent Palestine.

"I'm immensely proud that PCS has for many years led the calls in the trade union movement in demanding justice for the people of Palestine in Gaza and the West Bank," she said.

"And we've been absolutely clear: until Palestine is a free and independent nation, we will continue marching, we will continue protesting, and we will continue to back the campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions."

She paid tribute to everyone who has made the protests so large against the war crimes and ethnic cleansing we are witnessing in Gaza and the West Bank and lobbied their MP.

"We cannot be bystanders. We cannot walk by on the other side," she said.

Atrocities

She highlighted 57 years of illegal occupation, decades of settlement-building and the ethnic cleansing that goes with it and the atrocities of Israel's Gaza onslaught in which over 40,000 people have been killed.

She criticised the UK Government for standing by. She said that the horrific reports coming out of the West Bank in recent weeks demonstrate what happens when you turn a blind eye and condone war crimes.

"Netanyahu and the terrorist settler movement have been empowered to extend their ethnic cleansing of Palestinians," she said.

"There is no moral or legal case not to ban all arms sales to Israel immediately. We are complicit – just as the dealer who sells a knife or a gun to a common criminal is complicit."

Fran told the meeting that PCS members work in government departments that grant weapons licences.

"And if the government doesn't respect international law, we will continue to explore the possibility of taking legal action in defence of our members," she said.

"So, our approach will be to campaign and support campaigns to change and toughen government policy."

Kate Bell, TUC Assistant General Secretary, said that the TUC is determined to use its power in solidarity with Palestinians.

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