

The Wall Must Fall

We ask that you support Resolutions #111 - 116 submitted by BCGEU, CUPE Local 703, VESTA, Vancouver & District Labour Council, Kamloops & District Labour Council and Mount Waddington North Vancouver Island Labour Council.

In July 2004, the International Court of Justice (the United Nations' highest judicial body) ruled that Israel's "separation wall" is illegal, and that it must be torn down immediately.

By a vote of 14-1, the Court made it clear that Israel has a right to build a wall for its own protection against terrorism, *but not on someone else's land.*



Only 10% of the wall is being built on the 1967 border between Israel and the West Bank, the only border the world recognises.

The other 90% of the wall snakes through Palestinian lands, completely enclosing whole

towns and villages. It separates thousands of Palestinian farmers from their fields, workers from their jobs, and students from their schools. It effectively imprisons 2.2 million people.

The underlying aim of the wall is to ensure that the 200 Jewish-only settlements as well as the confiscated Palestinian lands in the West Bank remain in Israel's hands in perpetuity. These settlements are themselves illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Their existence constitutes a war crime under both Canadian and international law.

After the World Court brought down its ruling, Israel immediately announced that it would not obey it. "It belongs in the garbage can of history," said Prime Minister Sharon's spokesperson. Two weeks later, the United Nations' General Assembly voted 150-6 to demand that Israel immediately comply with the ruling. Canada was one of 10 countries that abstained on this vote.

The World Court's judgement and the UN resolution both establish that international law has a central role to play in the search for peace in the Middle East. Israel's refusal to abide by legal rulings and UN resolutions places it in the role of a serial offender.

Its defiance – backed by the country's overwhelming military strength and unquestioning support from the United States – ensures that the Middle East conflict will continue to be characterized by the use of brute force rather than the rule of law.

Please turn over...

Why it is important for Canadian labour to take a stand on this issue

Only international pressure can put a stop to Israel's illegal wall. In the aftermath of the ICJ decision, the Presbyterian and Anglican churches, along with other groups, are considering sanctions against Israel like those that were deployed to bring an end to South African apartheid. We should echo these voices. It is our goal to deliver a clear message to the Canadian government that by supporting this resolution, we want our elected leaders to understand that Canadian unionists are saying *the wall must fall*.

Some may argue that this resolution is "anti-semitic" because it criticises Israel. We strongly disagree. This is an issue of basic human rights and international law. Notable progressives such as Nelson Mandela, Noam Chomsky and Libby Davies agree that the wall must fall. At the same time, prominent conservatives like George Bush, Conrad Black, David Asper and Stockwell Day are giving unqualified support to the construction of Israel's apartheid wall.

Resolution

Whereas the trade union movement recognizes that peaceful resolution of international disputes requires respect for international law, and

Whereas the International Court of Justice in the Hague ruled July 2, 2004 that the separation wall Israel is constructing in occupied Palestinian territory is illegal and that the wall makes it impossible for Palestinians to exercise their right of self-determination, and

Whereas the Court ruled that no state should recognize this illegal wall and that every state should work to dismantle it, and

Whereas July 21, 2004 the U.N. General Assembly voted 150-6, with 10 abstentions, including Canada's, to endorse the International Court of Justice decision,

Therefore be it resolved that the B.C. Federation of Labour through the Canadian Labour Congress demand that the Canadian government uphold international law and enforce the International Court of Justice decision by taking every measure within its power to dismantle the Israeli separation wall in the West Bank.

This leaflet is published by the Trade Union Committee for Justice in the Middle East (TUCJME). TUCJME has members in CUPE, BCGEU, CAW, CUPW, BCTF and other affiliates of the BC Fed and the CLC. If you would like information about TUCJME or are interested in news about the situation in Israel-Palestine, please contact us at tucjme@telus.net.