SADAKA – TUFP Public MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 20TH NOVEMBER 2013, 6pm, in LIBERTY HALL

“THE ECONOMICS OF OCCUPATION – THE CHALLENGE FOR TRADE UNIONS”

Dr. Mohammed Amara
Internat. Secretary, Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions

Mags O'Brien, Chair: Trade Union Friends of Palestine

Philip O'Connor, SADAKA - The Ireland Palestine Alliance
TRADE UNION
FRIENDS OF PALESTINE
Campaigning in solidarity with the Palestinian people
Gaza, November 2012 – Aftermath of yet another “targeted” Israeli air strike, which killed 103
1948 – Nakhba
Nakhba 1948–2013
Current situation: Key Issues

1. Illegal Occupation
2. Refugees
3. Illegal colonial settlements
4. The “Wall”

All of these are massive breaches of UN resolutions.

UN members are obliged under Article 25 of UN Charter “to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council”, the UN’s highest body. In other words, Security Council resolutions are binding on UN members (whereas General Assembly resolutions are not).

Israel in breach of 40 of UN SC resolutions
Settlements

The illegal Israeli settlement Har Homa (formerly Abu Ghneim), East Jerusalem
There are now 600,000 illegal settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem (40% of West Bank)

Israeli settlers use 7 times the amount of water provided to Palestinian residents

4th Geneva Convention (ratified by Israel) states ‘The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.’

UN Security Council resolution 446 (March 1979), repeated in 452 (July 1979) and 465 (March 1980), demands population transfer cease and settlers be removed. Israel continues to refuse to comply.
Why ICTU supports Palestine

1. Irish trade unions, north and south, have always supported democratic solutions to national conflicts;

2. Irish unions support civil rights and self-determination of nations;

3. Irish unions support solidarity with trade unionists around the world struggling for the rights of working people;

4. Ireland the first EU state to recognise PLO and right to statehood.

5. Irish trade unions were the first in the western world to support sanctions and boycott of Israeli goods to enforce compliance with International Law

[See ICTU: Israel and Palestine. ICTU Delegation Visit Nov. 2007]
The Issues today

*Can be summed up simply:*

- End the Occupation
- Support the national and democratic rights of the Palestinian people
“Area C”
Palestinian Loss of Land 1946 – 2008
West Bank:

- 5,600 km²
- Greenline
- Oslo A
- Area C
- Palestinian Built-up areas
- Population: 2,350,583
- PCBS Census 2007
- Israeli settlements
- approx. 149 settlements, 100 outposts
- Population: Approx. 500,000
Why Area ‘C’ matters

- 1995 Interim Agreement: “temporary” division of West Bank into Areas: A, B, C
- Area C: Israel full control over security, planning and zoning. No PA presence.
- 1% of land of Area C for Palestinian development
- Area C: = 61% of the West Bank – without it, a Palestinian state will be little more than a series of cantons
- All significant water and land reserves available for Palestinian development
- 150,000 Palestinians
- 350,000 settlers in Area C
- Jordan Valley (30% of WB) – potentially the bread basket of Palestine - strategic importance for future Palestinian state
Myth of the Peace dividend

- Netanyahu and “economic peace”.
- Kerry/Blair plan for $4bn private investment as part of Talks.
- World Bank Report shows this is illusory: “no serious investment in Area C until Israel’s control ends”.
Peace talks and ethnic cleansing

Dr. Mustafa Barghouti: “Israel Used Peace Talks To Implement Apartheid”
Since 2000, more than 4,800 Palestinian houses and structures have been demolished by the Israeli authorities in Area C.
Area C – main challenges

- **Forced Displacement**: ‘policies and practices ... make it difficult for residents to meet basic needs or maintain their presence on the land’. (UNOCHA, 2011)

- **Dispossession**:  
  - Most of Area C reserved for Israeli settlements and/or closed military zones  
  - Shrinking space for Palestinian development, e.g. Yanoun  
  - < 1% of Area C zoned for Palestinian development  
  - Home demolitions  
  - Unequal access to water, esp. Jordan Valley.

- **Israeli settler violence**:  
  - 2011 settler attacks 144% of 2009 levels  
  - 90% of complaints of settler violence never go to court.  
  - Over 80 communities (250,000 Palestinians) exposed to settler violence,
West Bank and Gaza - Area C and the future of the Palestinian economy.

Report No. AUS2922. 2\textsuperscript{nd} October 2013
World Bank Report

- Israel extracting massive resources and maintaining control in violation of 1993 Oslo accords.
- Now over 200 Israeli settlements
- *This is the location of almost all the resources a Palestinian state will need.*
- Could generate $3.4 billion p.a., increasing Palestinian GDP by 35%, reducing deficit by 56%, cutting unemployment, poverty and food insecurity
The Wall
• **West BANK GDP contracted 2012 by 0.1%.**
• **Israeli occupation authorities regularly deny development permits and restrict movement.**
• **Severe restrictions on water supplies from Israeli controlled acquifers.**
• **PA forced to concentrate on densely populated, resource-poor third of the West Bank under their full or partial control (Areas A+B).**
Education levels lowest in the most restricted areas – relentless decline in education levels;

Output declines continuously since 1984.

Immediate economic growth of 20% would occur if restrictions removed.
“Area C is key to future Palestinian economic development”

“slowdown has exposed the distorted nature of the economy and its artificial reliance on donor-financed consumption”

“unemployment ... remains very high and almost a quarter of the workforce employed by the Palestinian Authority”

“Israeli restrictions on trade, movement and access [are] the dominant deterrent ... the key to Palestinian prosperity ... lies in the removal of these restrictions.”

“the potential additional output from the sectors evaluated in this report alone would amount to at least USD 2.2 billion per annum in valued added terms - a sum equivalent to 23 percent of 2011 Palestinian GDP”
“Irrigating this unexploited area as well as accessing additional range and forest land could deliver an additional USD 704 million in value added to the Palestinian economy - equivalent to 7 percent of 2011 GDP.”

Access to mineral wealth of the Dead Sea “could derive up to USD 918 million per annum - equal to 9 percent of 2011 GDP, almost equivalent to the size of the entire Palestinian manufacturing sector.”

Similar calculations of added value potential of release of restrictions on other resources, e.g. Tourism, construction.

If restrictions removed, “increase in GDP would lead to a 35 percent increase in employment.”
Actions needed by Ireland ...

- Government re-affirm Ireland’s commitment to full Palestinian statehood at UN.
- Government must insist that removal of Area C restrictions not await the “Peace Negotiations”.
- Israeli institutions (companies, academic etc.) involved in settlements must be excluded from EU funded programmes (e.g. HORIZON 2020).
- Build international pressure on Israel to force it to abide by International Law.
Actions needed by Irish Trade Unionists

1. **Promote pressure on Israel to obey international law**
   *PGFTU calls for sanctions on Israel and boycott especially of goods/services from illegal settlements. ICTU unions promote this policy in European and international union bodies, and with the Irish public.*

2. **Support Palestinian democratic demands**
   *Seek end of Israeli strangulation of Palestinian economy and freedom of Palestinian economic activity in Area C.*

3. **Get your union to support action on ICTU policy**
   *Pass motions through your unions seeking action on ICTU policy.*

4. **Get your union to twin with comparable union in Palestine**
   *Seek twinning agreements with sister unions to implement practical on-the-ground solidarity projects in Palestine.*
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