

TUC Congress 2009

Trade Union Friends of Israel Report

Trade Union Friends of Israel TUC Update

Welcome to this 2009 TUC Congress special update. It has been a busy year for all those involved with Trade Union Friends of Israel (TUPI) and the promotion of trade union co-operation.

TUPI has been involved in a number of activities to brief and inform trade unionists on political and industrial developments in the Middle East. And since the Gaza conflict in early 2009 we have been working hard to maintain trust and understanding between Israeli and Palestinian trade unions.

We remain optimistic, with the engagement of Senator Mitchell, who played such a pivotal role during the peace process in Northern Ireland, and President Obama's careful and systematic steps to revive the peace process seeming to gain traction.

Israeli-Palestinian Trade Union Cooperation

We are pleased to report that co-operation between Israeli and Palestinian trade unions has been increasing throughout the year, building on the success of the landmark agreement signed in 2008 to base future relations on negotiation, dialogue and joint initiatives to advance "fraternity and co-existence".

In July 2009, Israeli and Palestinian transport unions outlined plans to hold joint training seminars under the auspices of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) to cement the previous agreements

signed in 2007. And in May 2009, the Building and Woodworkers' International Union (BWI) negotiated a groundbreaking agreement between the Histadrut and the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) to enable Palestinian construction workers to gain apprenticeships and work experience in Israel.

These initiatives are the building blocks for trust and confidence towards a long-term peace settlement and crucially have the full endorsement and approval of the PGFTU.

Delegation

In November 2008 TUFI took a large delegation to visit the region and meet with Israeli and Palestinian counterparts. A full itinerary included political and security briefings and meetings with senior trade unionists and politicians.



Trade Union Friends of Israel delegates in front of Jerusalem's Old City

The delegates were lucky enough to witness an important event to launch the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) agreement between Israeli and Palestinian transport unions, which was chaired by the President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, President James Hoffa.



[James Hoffa with Israeli and Palestinian transport union leaders](#)

We are hosting another delegation to Israel and Palestine this November; make sure your union is represented.

[Trade Union Conferences](#)

TUFI has attended many union conferences across the UK and held several fringe events this year.

At the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), Avital Shapira-Shabirow, Director of International Relations at the Histadrut, spoke about the growing relationship between her organisation and the PGFTU. And at Unison's annual conference we held a lively fringe event with the Irish peace activist Christopher Hudson, who spoke about the Northern Ireland peace process and how trade unions are vital to securing peace in the Middle East.

[Trade Unions Linking Israel and Palestine](#)

At the beginning of the year a collective of trade unions from the UK, US, Australia and

Germany created a global organisation Trade Unions Linking Israel and Palestine (TULIP) to help bring Israeli and Palestinians trade unionists together. TUFI has welcomed this initiative and encourages trade unions to join.

At this year's TUC Congress TUFI is proud to host our annual fringe event with guest speakers from TULIP, as well as from the TUC and OneVoice – please do come along.

[About Trade Union Friends of Israel \(TUFI\)](#)

We aim to promote working towards a long and lasting peace settlement for both Palestinians and Israelis with a viable Palestine and a safe and secure Israel.

We do this by;

- Taking delegations of British trade unionists to meet with their Israeli and Palestinian counterparts
- Creating an environment where trade unionists can openly and honestly discuss issues affecting working people in the region
- Promoting support for the peace process through briefings and hosting of events in the UK
- Encouraging individual unions to play an active part in developing relationships with sister unions in the region

To keep up-to-date with all developments in the Middle East concerning trade unionism please sign up to our mailing list via our brand new website: www.tufi.org.uk.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@tufi.org.uk.