

Statement from Social Workers for a Free Palestine

On Wednesday 18th February 2026 the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) held a Special General Meeting (SGM) to consider the continuing membership of the Israel Union of Social Workers (IUSW). Motions were proposed at this meeting for the expulsion or the suspension of the IUSW, with a 75% majority required for either of these to be carried.

Sadly, although a majority of those member associations voting wanted the IUSW to be suspended, the 75% threshold was not reached for either motion. The case for expulsion, that the IUSW are in breach of the IFSW's Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles, was brilliantly presented by the Irish Association of Social Workers, supported by the Spanish and Greek Associations, and the Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists spoke in the debate with power, dignity and an unanswerable moral authority.

However, many of the written statements submitted by associations prior to the SGM and of the oral contributions made in the debate demonstrated a significant lack of understanding of the nature of Israel's settler-colonialism, its illegal occupation of Palestinian land, and the apartheid and genocide it is perpetrating; and of the IUSW's complicity in this. That the IUSW is continuing as a full member of IFSW despite its members playing an active part in the genocide, the IUSW refusing to seek exemption for its members from active combat roles, or to speak out publicly for peace, shows that the IFSW and its members are shamefully prepared to put expediency ahead of principle, and calls into question the actual value of its statement of ethical principles.

Social Workers for a Free Palestine will continue to support the struggle of our Palestinian social work colleagues for freedom, equality and justice, and to work together with all social workers of conscience and all social work associations committed to re-establishing social work as an ethical profession based on respect for human rights and social justice.

If you're a social worker or social care worker and would like to become actively involved, or be added to our contacts list, email sw4palestineuk@gmail.com