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## VTHC Statement on Palestine

VTHC is the peak body for unions in Victoria representing over 40 unions and almost 500,000 union members across all industries in Victoria.

VTHC is appalled at the latest outbreak of violence unfolding across Israel and Palestine, including Gaza, and now spreading into neighbouring countries, like Lebanon.

We grieve for the lives lost. The killing of so many children and young people is heartbreaking.

We grieve for the workers who have been killed on the job in this violence – including nurses, health workers, paramedics and journalists.

VTHC condemns the abominable actions of Hamas on 7 October, including the violent mass killings of Israeli civilians and joins the international community in demanding the immediate release of hostages.

VTHC calls for an end to the violence in Israel and Palestine, and for the international community to work quickly towards a resolution for lasting peace, which must at its heart recognise the state of Palestine and the freedom and equality of its citizens. For a lasting peace to be meaningful, Palestinians must have the same rights, self-determination, and access to resources, as any other democratic nation.

VTHC expresses its concern for Gazan workers, their families, and their communities as they struggle without food, water, electricity, and fuel or a means to exit Gaza.

The indiscriminate bombing of Gaza is a crime and must stop. Giving residents prior warning before a missile strike does not justify the destruction of someone's home and community infrastructure. We are especially concerned for Gazan's who are either unable or incapable of moving. Military objectives should never be prioritised over protecting civilian lives.

We call on international leaders to be consistent in their support for universal human rights. One war crime does not justify another. Civilians everywhere are innocent. Collective punishment is wrong and human rights are not selective.

Lastly, the union movement is a movement of peace. We reiterate our strong opposition to all forms of violence, as well as racism, antisemitism, and islamophobia.

### Other Statements of Support

As an organisational member of Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA, VTHC supports their statement, available online here:

<https://www.apheda.org.au/statement-on-the-humanitarian-crisis-in-palestine/>

### Gaza Humanitarian Appeal

Victorian unionists are encouraged to support the Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA Gaza Humanitarian Appeal, which can be found at:

<https://gaza-emergency-appeal-2023.raisely.com/>

Funds raised will support their partner organisation MA'AN Development Centre, a local Palestinian NGO that provides aid to women, their children and farmers. MA'AN has operated in Palestine for over 30 years with 290 staff across the West Bank and Gaza.



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**THE VOICE OF WORKING VICTORIANS**