



DATE: January 17, 2024

TO: AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond

FROM: Martin Luther King Jr. County Labor Council (MLK Labor), Seattle WA

SUBJECT: Labor Solidarity for Israel Palestine Ceasefire

Honorable President Shuler and Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond,

On October 16, 2023 the Martin Luther King Jr. County Labor Council's largest affiliate representing over 50,000 workers, UFCW Local 3000, [published a letter](#) alongside United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America urging the United States Congress and President Biden to call for a ceasefire in Israel and Palestine. Many other local unions passed resolutions signing on to support Local 3000's demands or issuing statements of their own. Among those in King County are IATSE 15, UNITE HERE 8, SEIU 6, PROTEC17, UAW, AFT Washington, Federal Way Education Association, OPEIU 8, Seattle Education Association, and countless rank-and-file members.

As the Central Labor Council representing these parties and over 100 other unions in Seattle and King County WA, it is MLK Labor's responsibility to listen to our local affiliates and communicate their concerns to the AFL-CIO, especially amid increasing concern about the ongoing siege on Gaza. MLK Labor would like to recommend and urge the AFL-CIO to revise their statement on the continuing conflict, initially published on October 11, 2023, to reflect the demands of Labor and Community Affiliates of MLK Labor:

- **The basic rights of people must be restored.** Water, fuel, food, and other humanitarian aid must be allowed into Gaza, power must be restored, and foreign nationals and Palestinians requiring medical care must be allowed out of Gaza.
- **Israeli hostages taken by Hamas must be immediately released, as should wrongfully imprisoned Palestinians.** Both Hamas and Israel must adhere to standards of international law and Geneva Convention rules of warfare concerning the welfare and security of civilians.
- **There must be a permanent ceasefire in Gaza.** The cycle of violence must stop so that negotiations for an enduring peace proceed and Palestinians and Israelis can live their lives with basic human rights.

With regard to unions' roles in geopolitical issues, the question has already been asked and answered. The MLK Labor constitution names an objective of MLK Labor to, "give constructive aid in assisting the AFL-CIO in promoting the cause of democracy, peace, and freedom throughout the world." Every delegate of this council took an oath to uphold this commitment, and over the course of history of our institution, we are proud to have spoken out many times. For example, in 1938, our labor council passed a resolution condemning the persecution of Jewish people in Germany. The Labor Movement has always relied on the innate sense of right and wrong that is within working people, both because it motivates workers to organize, and because it motivates the community to support workers, even when unjust laws are not on our side.

King County Washington's working people are of diverse nationality, religion, race and ethnic background, but all of us hope for security and peace, just as the Palestinian and Israeli peoples do. As an extension of this commitment, we want to be unequivocal in our condemnation of any hate crimes or expressions of antisemitism or Islamophobia against Muslims, Jews, or anyone else that have been committed in response to this conflict. As the largely civilian death toll exceeds 22,000 in early-January 2024, it is imperative that the American labor movement be a voice of morality, justice and reason, and it is for these reasons that we call for the AFL-CIO to reconsider its stance on the conflict in Gaza.

In Solidarity,



Katie Garrow
Executive Secretary-Treasurer
MLK Labor

KATIE GARROW, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY-TREASURER | TOM LAMBRO, PRESIDENT | STEFAN MORITZ, VICE PRESIDENT

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