



Guidance for international cultural unions and associations from Palestinian institutions

Palestinian cultural workers appeal for meaningful solidarity

April 2026

As Palestinian cultural institutions made up of many hundreds of dancers, actors, musicians, playwrights, singers, circus performers and others, we are beyond devastated by Israel's ongoing genocide against our people in Gaza. The so-called ceasefire has only provided cover for a continuation of the genocide in less visible forms. We insist on the rights of all our people to live in dignity first and foremost, free from genocide, occupation and apartheid.

And yet, because of our dedication to our art, we cannot but convey our dismay at the anti-Palestinian [racism](#), censorship and complicity of some international arts and cultural institutions. Despite the horrors wrought upon our people in Gaza with the backing of the colonial West, we are heartened by the growing number of arts, media and music unions; grassroots entertainment labor groups; writers' collectives and cultural associations worldwide that are amplifying our people's rights and our peaceful calls for accountability.

The absolute legal and ethical duties of all states, corporations, unions and other institutions to end complicity in Israel's genocide in Gaza and its underlying regime of settler-colonial apartheid have never been clearer. Upholding these obligations has never been more urgent. Following the determinations of the world's highest court, the International Court of Justice, of [a plausible risk of genocide in Gaza](#) and [the illegality of Israel's military occupation and apartheid](#), and a UN commission finding that [Israel has committed genocide](#), this is not only a moral obligation, but a legal one. The expansion of Israel's aggression across the wider region, in partnership with Trump, shows the urgency of standing up to the dangerous idea that "might makes right."

Since the onset of Israel's genocide in Gaza—that has killed [at least 80,000 Palestinians](#) as of January 2025—Palestinian trade unions have consistently called for international solidarity, urging unions worldwide to take action against entities complicit in Israel's genocide and apartheid. Historically, including in the struggle that ended apartheid in South Africa, organized labor has been the working person's leverage, a powerful force for peace and justice when governments fail. Solidarity is at the core of this power—an injury to one is truly an injury to all.

In the context of inspiring grassroots organizing among cultural workers worldwide, and rising demand from cultural workers and unions for meaningful accountability measures, **we offer the following key guidance** for all arts and culture unions, associations, and workers. We encourage you to distribute these widely among your membership and urgently organize toward implementing them as union-wide policies. This guidance is rooted in international law and in several decades of authoritative calls from Palestinian civil society for ending complicity with apartheid Israel.

1. Reject censorship and “blacklisting”

Support the universal rights of cultural workers to internationally-accepted [principles](#) of freedom of expression and association.

Many grassroots initiatives within cultural unions have [highlighted](#) the need to defend these rights in the face of institutional and state repression and censorship.

Union leadership should [promote](#) and endorse these initiatives—and denounce institutions, companies and states that violate members’ rights.

2. Refuse to work with institutions, corporations, events or projects that are verifiably complicit in Israel’s atrocity crimes against Palestinians

Uphold the [call](#) from Palestinian civil society for refusing to work with Israeli cultural institutions—including venues, events, production and promotions companies, broadcasters, foundations and publishers—that are implicated in whitewashing, justifying or advocating for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

Many tens of thousands of international cultural workers and at least fifteen hundred arts organizations have publicly endorsed calls from Palestinian society, including the absolute majority of artists, writers and cultural workers, to disengage from Israeli and international institutions and companies that are complicit in our oppression, and to refuse invitations from events or projects sponsored by them.

We urge union leaders to uphold, promote and endorse the pledges of their members to end complicity in Israel’s genocide and underlying regime of settler-colonial-apartheid, and to work towards divesting union health and pension funds from complicit Israeli and international corporations. Doing no harm is a profound ethical responsibility.

3. Exclude genocidal Israel from international cultural organizations

Despite the growing horror of most of humanity at its livestreamed genocide in Gaza, Israel continues to hold membership of international cultural organizations, federations and associations. International members should work towards excluding genocidal Israel’s associations and unions over their complicity in whitewashing and justifying atrocity crimes (war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide) just as apartheid South Africa was once excluded.

4. Pressure governments to compel Israel to end the genocide through lawful sanctions

Many governments have enabled the carnage in Gaza, through arms sales, the maritime transfer of weapons, and shielding genocidal Israel from accountability. At the same time, a growing number of states have recently instated policies of military, energy or trade embargo on Israel.

Unions have an important role to play in pressuring governments to meet their obligations under international law, including through targeted, lawful sanctions to end genocide. States and institutions must also conduct [due diligence](#) on suspected war criminals.

We hope this guidance can be useful for you and your memberships.

The Palestinian Performing Arts Network

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