

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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ICFTU welcomes Israel-Palestine ceasefire

Brussels, 9 February 2005 (ICFTU OnLine): The ICFTU today welcomed the declaration of ceasefire by the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and newly-elected Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas as a new chance for peace between Palestinians and Israelis. The agreement between the two sides opens up the possibility of reviving the "road map" to peace and the co-existence of two sovereign, viable states.

The ICFTU believes that moves towards a lasting peace must be accompanied by measures to tackle the enormous problems affecting the Palestinian economy, beset by massive unemployment and enormous pressure on public services. Central to this is the freedom of movement of Palestinians and the lifting of restrictions on their employment. At the same time, the Israeli government needs to fundamentally change the direction of its economic policies, which have seriously undermined the living standards and working conditions of Israeli working people.

"Moves towards peace must be underpinned by progress on the critical social and economic issues facing the region", said ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder, adding "both sides will need to show determination and commitment in order to overcome the obstacles on the path to peace. Action must be taken to create decent employment and ensure respect for international labour standards, as an essential cornerstone for a just and lasting peace."

The ICFTU represents 145 million workers in 233 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. ICFTU is also a partner in Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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