

End the detention and torture of Palestinian students

This AGM is appalled by the continued violence experienced by the people of Palestine at the hands of the Israeli Government, and especially the detention and torture of young people. We condemn the recent rise in the detention of students with Addameer, a Palestinian prisoners' rights organisation stating in September 2019 that over 260 Palestinian High School and university students imprisoned in Israeli jails since the start of last year.

A Palestinian journalism student, Mays Abu Ghosh is one such detainee. She remains in detention but has spoken through her lawyer of the physical and mental torture she was subject to under interrogation. She has described being slapped, beaten, deprived of sleep and put in stress position. She was threatened with the detention of her whole family and her 17 year old brother has since been placed in "administrative detention" where he can be held without charge or trial. Mays is 22.

This AGM condemns Israel's treatment of Palestinian students and other Palestinians in their prisons and calls on the branch to

1. Raise this matter at Scottish Council and National Delegate Conference and call on the union to highlight these appalling abuses and to lobby the UK and devolved governments to press the Government of Israel to end the detention and torture of Palestinian students like Mays Abu Ghosh.
2. Write to local MPs and MSPs calling on them to raise this issue in the Westminster and the Scottish Parliament and to call on their governments to press the Government of Israel to end the detention and torture of Palestinian students like Mays Abu Ghosh.
3. Publicise the branch position to members to raise awareness of these abuses and encourage members to lobby their MPs and MSPs.
4. Raise this issue through Labour Link and call on them to add their voice to the condemnation of Israel's detention and torture of Palestinian young people.
5. Continue to support a campaign of Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel and urge employers to boycott Israeli goods and cultural events and pension funds to divest from companies profiting from the Israeli government's oppression of the people of Palestine.

Branch Committee

<https://samidoun.net/2020/01/palestinian-student-mays-abu-ghosh-speaks-out-on-israeli-abuse-and-torture-under-interrogation/>

Attendance Management procedures should support not stress

This AGM is seriously concerned about Aberdeenshire Council's Attendance Management Procedure, particularly the draconian sickness absence triggers which have led to increased numbers of members falling foul of these and ending up either coming to work when unwell, or in formal procedures which place more and more stress on them and can result in dismissal.

We are concerned that staff who already have disabilities and underlying medical conditions are very vulnerable to hitting triggers with subsequent action being taken. We believe that putting additional pressure on these employees is in no one's interests – not the employees, the council or the service users. We are also concerned that it is in breach of equalities law. It certainly does not sit with the council as a Disability Confident employer.

The branch believes that Sickness Absence procedures must be genuinely supportive and distinguish between genuine ill-health and unnecessary absence. We believe that this approach would promote better health at work and would reduce absence through work related stress.

We believe that the council's procedures should also be consistent with the Scottish Government's Fair Work Framework which should be used as a benchmark.

This AGM calls on the branch to

1. Negotiate robustly with the council for a better Attendance Management procedure which properly supports staff who have genuine ill-health or who have chronic health conditions or disabilities. This procedure should have a focus on ensuring that reasonable adjustments are put in place where necessary and that disability leave is properly utilised to support these staff.
2. Lobby councillors as appropriate seeking their support for a disability friendly and equalities compliant procedure.
3. Ensure that any new procedure has had a thorough Equality Impact Assessment and Health and Safety Risk Assessment
4. Meantime press the council for a robust Equality Impact Assessment on the existing Attendance Management procedure to check that it does not discriminate against people with disabilities, mental ill-health and underlying medical conditions.

Branch Committee