

## **COSATU condemns Israeli assault on Gaza**

The Congress of South African Trade Unions vehemently condemns today's murderous Israeli attack on the people of Palestine, when Israeli warplanes and combat helicopters killed at least 155 people and wounded around 200 more in Gaza. It is reported that in Gaza City the dead and wounded lay scattered on the ground after more than 30 airstrikes destroyed several security compounds, including two where Hamas was hosting graduation ceremonies for new recruits.

Today's death toll is even worse than on the five-day Israeli offensive in March, which killed more than 120 people. It is the highest loss of life in a single day in more than 20 years. And yet the Israeli government says that today's attack is "just the beginning" of their offensive against the people of Gaza!

Among the dead, according to medical workers' reports, are police chief, Tawfiq Jabber, the head of Hamas's security and protection unit, and the governor of central Gaza. Contrary to the Israeli claim that it had only targeted "terrorist infrastructure", TV footage clearly shows wounded children being carried to hospital. Yet again civilians are bearing the brunt of the bombings and shootings.

COSATU endorses the view of Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, that this Israeli air campaign was "criminal" and backs his call for the international community to intervene.

The federation reaffirms more strongly than ever its demand that Israel must immediately withdraw all occupation forces from Gaza and end the occupation of all Palestinian land. It must abide by international human rights law, and refrain from imposing collective punishment on Palestinian civilians (as per the UN Human Rights Council declaration issued on 6 July 2006), which it has blatantly contravened today.

All workers and freedom-loving people of South Africa and the world should intensify the boycott of Israeli goods. COSATU reiterates its call for the government of South Africa to break diplomatic ties with Apartheid Israel and institute sanctions against it until it ends its 40 years of military occupation of Palestine and recognise the people's right to sovereignty and self-determination.

Patrick Craven (National Spokesperson)  
Congress of South African Trade Unions