

September 25, 2025

Hi Ruth,

Thank you for your email. We started the morning with difficult news about 20 + people injured from a drone launched at civil society overnight. So, I am only finding the time to respond now.

I read the previous correspondence between you and Brian.

I can only imagine how challenging it must be to manage these changes and secure a new venue without any on-the-ground support, especially given FO's unwillingness to uphold their commitment to IFSW Europe at the last-minute. That said, it's reassuring to know that the IFSW leadership is standing behind you during this process. Thank you for updating us on the situation and the steps you are taking to resolve it.

At the outset, I want to emphasize that Reut and I represent the Israeli Union of Social Workers, not the Government of Israel. Therefore, the Norwegian union's decision to boycott us — despite the fact that we do not represent the Israeli government — is unjustified.

I would also like to remind everyone that 48 hostages are still being held captive by Hamas, and that the current war followed the October 7th massacre — an unprecedented atrocity in the history of the State of Israel.

Nevertheless, I want to reiterate that we recognize the suffering in Gaza. I am deeply troubled by the ongoing events in Gaza and profoundly concerned about their impact on Israeli society from within. As a citizen, a social worker, and a representative of a professional union, I am committed to utilizing every means at my disposal to advocate for the cessation of the killing of innocent civilians in Gaza, and for the safeguarding of the lives of our soldiers and hostages. I speak out at every opportunity and on every platform, including protests the government and in support of ending the war — calling for the immediate cessation of hostilities and ending the war immediately. We can provide videos from those protests if needed.

War is inherently a lose-lose scenario, with consequences that inevitably extend to all parties involved, including us. Our social workers are supporting more families and individuals than ever before, with severe cases of trauma, loss, and displacement. We firmly believe that peace is the only path to achieving a better future for all of us.

Reut and I place great importance on attending both the Delegates Meeting and the conference that follows. I've always believed that being part of IFSW enriches our union and our social workers by connecting all of us under this global community that shares knowledge, struggles, and solidarity in pursuit of better outcomes—for social workers and, by extension, for those we care for.

We come with the intention of learning and understanding all perspectives. We hope that under your leadership, this forum can recognize the unique position we hold as main stakeholders—one that enables IFSW Europe to make a meaningful impact on the situation. This impact must go beyond one-sided statements and instead contribute to ending the current reality of widespread anguish affecting all sides.

I regret that FO Norway has chosen to adopt a position that shuts down the possibility of open discussion and, in doing so, channels its support for the Palestinian cause in a way that contradicts our shared values. That said, should they reconsider, we would welcome the opportunity for a respectful and constructive dialogue.

Looking forward to hearing from you further.

Warm regards,

Inbal.