

To all members of
IFSW – International Federation of Social Workers

Statement of the National-Coordinating Body Austria regarding the expulsion / suspension of IUSW (Israeli Union of Social Workers)

Vienna, 13th February 2026

Dear Members of IFSW, fellow Colleagues,
first, we like to express our gratitude to Pascal Rudin for providing us as a member of IFSW with detailed information on the historical background and ethical concerns regarding the topic of the Special General Meeting on February 18th 2026.

The document shows the long underlying conflicts, that led to the current situation in which we as a member are asked to vote in favour or against an expulsion or suspension of the member IUSW (Israeli Union of Social Workers) because they are accused to counteract the basic interests, aims and policies of the federation outlined in Article 9 of the IFSW Ethical Principals.

The present request accuses the IUSW, that its refusal to request exemption for social workers enrolled in the military from serving in active combat roles and to issue a public call for peace is seen as contradicting to uphold the right of self-determinationⁱ and supporting peace and non-violence^{ii, iii}.

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The National Coordinating Body Austria has discussed the topic in-depth.

- In our opinion we as Social Workers from all over the world, coming from different backgrounds and societies share not only our common profession, but also are entangled in the same ethical dilemmas of how to deal with complex situations due to conflicting morals or values that we are bound to by the Global Definition of Social Work and the Statement of Ethical Principles.
- Ethical principles must be debated in relation to each other and not separately^{iv} and acting ethically can only be asked from persons, institutions or entities, who are able to make decisions.
- The constitution and the By-laws are insufficient regarding the design of expulsion and suspension. There is no established procedure especially on suspension, how long member organisations are suspended and how they could rejoin the global organisation.

Therefore, we as the National Coordinating Body Austria have decided to vote against the expulsion or suspension of IUSW.

Instead

- We call on IFSW Global to install procedures that facilitate ethical debates and decision making and keeping contact between members, whose countries are at war or are oppressing individuals, groups, communities or nations. We strongly support the proposal from Switzerland and Germany regarding possible procedures in this matter.
- We call on IUSW and the Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists to find common ground based on our shared values and to distinguish between the professional role as delegates of IFSW members and personal roles^v as civilians in a war that is neither fair nor just and violates human rights and dignity, as pointed out by several European Associations.

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- We suggest starting a moderated process to share concerns and expectations in a dialogue with all parties present and to create conditions that are informed by empirical evidence, practice wisdom, and ethical, legal and cultural considerations^{vi} to make sure that ethical principles are discussed, evaluated and
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We believe that Social Workers can make a difference and therefore we are obliged to find the best possible outcomes also when it comes to ethical dilemmas. We do need to be part of the change we want to see when it comes to others and need to stay in touch, debate and assure ourselves and others that upholding human rights, self-determination and social justice are worth fighting for at the same time acknowledging our constraints.

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Christoph Krenn (Executive)
Julia Pollak (Managing Director)
Enric Torras (Delate to IFSW Europe & Member of
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Stefan Rudolph (Delegate of Younion)

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ⁱ IFSW (2018): Ethical Principles of Social Work. Chapter 4. <https://www.ifsw.org/global-social-work-statement-of-ethical-principles/>

ⁱⁱ FSW (2018): Ethical Principles of Social Work. Chapter 9.3. <https://www.ifsw.org/global-social-work-statement-of-ethical-principles/>

^{iv} IASSW (2018) Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles. P.1. <https://www.ifsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Global-Social-Work-Statement-of-Ethical-Principles-IASSW-27-April-2018-1.pdf>

^v IFSW (2018): Ethical Principles of Social Work. Chapter 9.5. <https://www.ifsw.org/global-social-work-statement-of-ethical-principles/>

^{vi} IFSW (2018): Ethical Principles of Social Work. Chapter 9.7. <https://www.ifsw.org/global-social-work-statement-of-ethical-principles/>

^{viii} IFSW (2018): Ethical Principles of Social Work. Chapter 9.8. <https://www.ifsw.org/global-social-work-statement-of-ethical-principles/>