

To: Executive Committee of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)
From: British Association of Social Workers (BASW)
Date: February 2026
Subject: Special Delegates Meeting of the IFSW on Motion to Suspend or Exclude the Israeli Union of Social Workers (IUSW) 18.02.2025

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW), as the independent professional organization for social workers across the UK, submits the following statement in advance of the above meeting. BASW's work is led by social work values and ethical principles, respecting human rights. BASW has expressed concern about the violations and abuses of the people of Palestine and abhorred the military violence in Gaza. Our commitment calling for the upholding of human rights of Palestinian civilians to be protected is equaled by our commitment to calling for the rights of the Jewish community to live free of the fear of antisemitism. Our call is for fundamental human rights to be upheld for all people in accordance with the UN Declaration and the European Convention on Human Rights, and in alignment with our social work Code of Ethics.

The historical and social injustices of the Israel government are apparent and have been condemned internationally. The International Court of Justice (July 2024) made clear that Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands since 1967, and the subsequent creation of Israeli settlements and exploitation of natural resources, are illegal under international law. The International Criminal Court in the Hague (November 2024) ruled that Palestinians in Gaza are being subjected to crimes against humanity. Governments and international human rights organizations, including the United Nation Special Rapporteur on Human Rights (March 2025), have spoken out about the violation of human rights in the Palestinian territories.

BASW members, through an AGM, have expressed their concern about the lack of comments and actions by the Israeli Union of Social Workers (IUSW), including its members putting aside their social work practice, ethics and values. Previous censures by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) against the IUSW have not demonstrated a clear, or sustained change in their approach. Further it has declined to seek noncombative exemptions for social workers. We believe this does not adhere to nor demonstrate the Global Statement of Ethical Principles. Our members have therefore resolved that BASW should call for the expulsion of IUSW from IFSW.

Further we call upon the IFSW to examine the application of global ethical and moral principles and decision making in armed and persistent conflict, terrorism, violence and occupation, including issues of humanitarian concerns and the need to uphold international law. BASW supports the view that social workers must be prepared to address the political and moral volatility that arises from the use of collective violence and the normalization of militarization, and upholds accountability and ethical decision making. This reinforces social work as contributing to the democratization of society, founded on principles of peace, human rights, and social justice.