



**Written statement from The Norwegian Union of Social Educators and Social Workers (FO) and Icelandic Association of Social Workers regarding the Special General Meeting, taking place February 18<sup>th</sup> 2026.**

The Norwegian Union of Social Educators and Social Workers (FO) and the Icelandic Association of Social Workers would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit a written statement in advance of the Extraordinary General Meeting of IFSW.

We participate in this discussion based on the global ethical commitments of the social work profession, as articulated in the *IFSW Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles*. Central to these principles are the commitment to human rights, social justice, the protection of life and human dignity, and a clear responsibility to oppose structural violence, oppression, and discrimination.

Through several resolutions adopted by our respective National Congresses and National Executive Boards, there has been expressed clear solidarity with the Palestinian people and has condemned serious violations and abuses against Palestinian civilians. At the same time, we have consistently condemned all attacks on civilians, regardless of the perpetrator. This position is grounded in international law and international humanitarian law, and not least in the ethical foundation of the social work profession.

We acknowledge the Israeli social workers' organization's willingness to engage in dialogue, its stated support for peace, human rights, and a diplomatic solution to the conflict, as well as its expressed wish to contribute to contact and cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian social workers. These are important and necessary elements.

At the same time, we consider this insufficient when assessed against the profession's ethical obligations in a context marked by extensive and well-documented violations of international humanitarian law. We are particularly concerned by the lack of a clear, explicit, and public condemnation of abuses against Palestinian civilians and of actions that may be characterized as collective punishment and structural violence.

The ethical principles of IFSW make clear that social workers and their organizations have responsibilities that extend beyond individual practice, including the duty to challenge unjust social structures, state violence, and policies that violate human rights. This responsibility also applies when doing so is politically difficult, and when criticism is directed at one's own state or authorities.

The Norwegian and Icelandic social worker associations therefore believe that social work organizations that are members of IFSW must:



- **Clearly and publicly condemn serious violations of international law and abuses against civilians.**
- **Acknowledge asymmetrical power relations and the consequences of prolonged occupation.**
- **Support legitimate international mechanisms for the investigation of and accountability for serious violations of international law, including United Nations human rights mechanisms and the International Criminal Court.**
- **Use their professional and ethical voice to clearly and publicly oppose systematic violence, occupation, and oppression, and contribute to international pressure aimed at the protection of civilians.**

For us, this is not a matter of political partisanship, but of professional ethics, integrity, and credibility. Membership in a global professional community such as IFSW presupposes that organizations actively uphold and make visible these ethical principles — also when they are tested in situations of war and armed conflict.

We therefore consider it both legitimate and necessary for IFSW to set clear ethical expectations for its member organizations, and that a lack of clarity in the face of grave abuses against civilians must be able to carry consequences.

We hope that the Special General Meeting will contribute to an open and principled discussion on the responsibility of the social work profession in situations of armed conflict, and on the ethical minimum standards that must form the basis for membership in IFSW.

Yours sincerely,

***The boards of the Norwegian Union of Social Educators and Social Workers (FO) and the Icelandic Association of Social Workers***