

## **Press Statement**

**22 December 2025**

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### **Solidarity with pro-Palestine hunger strikers in British prisons**

We, the undersigned organisations, express our unwavering solidarity with pro-Palestine political prisoners on hunger strike in British jails.

We call on people of conscience in South Africa and across the world to demand that they are granted immediate bail and that their fundamental right to fair, transparent and timely trials are upheld.

Some of the hunger strikers have now passed the 50-day mark without food and may die if urgent action is not taken.

Their continued imprisonment without trial, reports of reluctance to provide them with adequate healthcare, and the government's refusal to meaningfully engage with their demands places the responsibility for loss of life with the British state.

The decision to undertake a hunger strike is a profound act of non-violent resistance. It is part of a long and solemn history of political prisoners using their own bodies as a last resort to counter repression.

South African anti-apartheid activists, and more recently Palestinian political prisoners and Guantánamo Bay detainees, are amongst those who have resorted to hunger strikes to assert their dignity in the absence of any other means available.

We urge Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government to reflect on the historical consequences of a Thatcherite response to the hunger strike that led to the deaths of Bobby Sands and nine other Irish Republican political prisoners in 1981.

This remains a moral stain on British history and it appears that Labour is pursuing the same trajectory.

Just like Sands and his comrades, the five current hunger strikers are all under the age of 31, the youngest being just 20-years-old. They are Qesser Zuhrah, Teuta Hoxha, Heba Muraisi, Kamran Ahmed and Amu Gib. The health of each one of them is critical. Amu and Kamran are hospitalised, Qesser is starting to lose her vision, Heba is losing memory, Teuta has dangerously low blood sugar levels and her skin is turning grey.

Their colleague Lewie Chiaramello is on a partial hunger strike due to diabetes, while Jon Cink and Umer Khalid – who has muscular dystrophy – recently stopped their hunger strike after being hospitalised. It is urgent that the British government acts without any further delay.

The hunger strikers are alleged to have broken into an Elbit System's factory and a Royal Air Force (RAF) base to stop the supply of fighter jet components to Israel and end British complicity in the Gaza genocide. They are being held on pre-trial

detention without bail. Some have been imprisoned for over a year, much longer than the standard custody limit of six months.

They are charged with offences allegedly carried out on behalf of Palestine Action, before the group was proscribed (banned) in the UK and designated a 'terrorist' organisation. Recent months have seen widespread defiance of the proscription, with thousands flouting the ban, carrying placards in support of the group and themselves courting arrest under terrorism laws.

The hunger strikers' demands are:

1. An end to all prison censorship, including the withholding of letters, phone calls and books;
2. Immediate bail for all Palestine Action prisoners currently held in UK prisons;
3. The right to a fair and timely trial for all Palestine Action prisoners;
4. The de-proscription of Palestine Action and the removal of its "terror" classification; and
5. The shutdown of all Elbit Systems sites and subsidiaries operating in the UK.

Our solidarity with the UK hunger strikers is inseparable from our commitment to freedom, dignity and justice for the Palestinian people. They have endured 78 years of Israeli occupation and more than two years of genocide, with close to 10 000 Palestinian political prisoners currently incarcerated in Israeli jails.

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***\* Note to editors: A 'Free the Political Prisoners' solidarity protest will be held on Tuesday, 23 December 2025 at the offices of the British Council (275 Jan Smuts Avenue, Dunkeld West, Johannesburg) at 11am.***

**Statement signed by:**

**South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU)**

**Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) - South African Chapter**

**Palestine Solidarity Alliance**

**The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA)**

**Abahlali Base Freedom Park**

**Ahmed Kathrada Foundation**

**Potch 4 Palestine**

**Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC CT)**

**Healthcare Workers 4 Palestine (HCW4P)**

**Palestine Solidarity Campaign (University of Pretoria)**

**South African Christians 4 Palestine (SAC4P)**  
**Gauteng Housing Crisis Committee**  
**Palestine Solidarity Alliance Tshwane(PSA Tshwane)**  
**Social Intifada**  
**South African Jews for a Free Palestine (SAJFP)**  
**Kopanang Africa Against Xenophobia**  
**Palestine Information Network (PIN)**  
**Kensington Palestine Solidarity Group**  
**Visual Intifada**  
**Vus'ikasi Lam**  
**Education 4 Humanities (E4H)**  
**WITS PSC**  
**Community with a Conscience**  
**SA BDS Coalition**  
**SA Christians for a Free Palestine**  
**Serapeng Sa Dithare**  
**Environment NPC**  
**Makause Community Development Forum (MACODEFO)**  
**Keep Left**  
**Sisonke Revolutionary Movement**  
**XR Gauteng**  
**South African Palestine Movement (SAPM)**  
**KZN PSF**  
**Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC Gauteng)**  
**South African Food Sovereignty Campaign (SAFC)**  
**Workers and Socialist Party**  
**Save our Sacred Lands**  
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