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Brazil

‘Brazil must set the example’: Unions, MPs urge Lula to cut ties with Israel over Gaza genocide

- Features -

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Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva needs to shift from words to action and break ties with Israel over its ongoing war on Gaza — that is the message coming from a growing number of trade unions, left parliamentarians, intellectuals and artists.

Lula has been outspoken over Gaza, having denounced Israel's actions as "genocide", "the equivalent of terrorism" and even [compared them to those of Nazi Germany](#).

Israel's military assault on Gaza has resulted in more than 60,000 reported Palestinian deaths — about 3% of Gaza's population. The actual death toll, though, is much higher when indirect deaths resulting from Israel's deliberate policies of blocking food and medical aid are taken into account.

In the face of such barbarity, some 200 high-profile intellectuals, artists and personalities signed a [collective open letter](#) to Lula, urging the president to break all diplomatic and trade relations with Israel.

In doing so, Brazil would meet its international obligations as laid out in the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) July 2024 ruling and United Nations General Assembly's September 2024 resolution — which Brazil voted for.

Acknowledging Lula's "firm and coherent" statements in "solidarity with the Palestinian people", the May 28 letter notes that despite this, Israel continues "violating international law at every possible level".

"The application of sanctions under international law is the appropriate and essential mechanism to address the situation," they wrote. "However, Brazil continues to export oil and negotiate the purchase and sale of military equipment with the Israeli state and its companies."

Israel's actions "are openly violating International Court of Justice rulings, placing it outside the law, and disrespecting the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly..."

"We are convinced it is time for our country to set an example in compliance with international law..."

"It is essential that Brazil join with other nations that have applied sanctions on the Israeli regime, break off diplomatic and commercial relations with the Zionist state ... and revoke the free trade agreement in force" between the two countries.

Such actions, "would undoubtedly serve as an example to other governments, sparking a much-needed wave of action to end this carnage and ensure the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully respected and guaranteed".

The letter, which was initiated by BDS Brazil, the local wing of the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel, was also signed by trade unions, including the country's main union confederation, Unified Workers' Central (CUT), and left-wing parties such as the Freedom and Socialism Party (PSOL).

PSOL deputies Sâmia Bomfim and Fernanda Melchionna — both Socialist Left Movement (MES) members — have

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been escalating the pressure on Lula Inside parliament by collecting signatures from MPs in support of breaking ties with Israel.

Speaking to [Revista Movimento](#), Bomfim said: "The world cannot remain inactive, watching the televised genocide in Palestine, without taking any measures to stop Israel — and Brazil must set an example!

"To fulfill our role in the fight against colonialist barbarity, we want Brazil to break off all diplomatic, commercial, military, energy and technological relations [with Israel]."

This message was echoed by the National Federation of Oil Workers (FNP) and the United Federation of Oil Workers (FUP), in their [joint letter](#) sent to Lula and four of his ministers on May 28, which argued that "Brazil must adopt more effective and robust practical measures in accordance with its international obligations".

Brazil has ongoing military agreements with Israel, the two unions noted, and supplied 9% of Israel's total crude oil between October 2023 and July 2024.

Brazilian oil, the unions wrote, has been crucial for Israel's "fleet of fighter jets, tanks and other military vehicles ... as well as the bulldozers that destroy infrastructure in the refugee camps and cities of the occupied West Bank".

They also noted legal expert warnings that "the provision of dual-use products such as oil", which can be used for military vehicles, "makes states complicit in genocide by providing material support to the perpetrator state".

What is needed instead is "an urgent total global energy and weapons embargo [on Israel] to stop the genocide and dismantle Israel's illegal occupation and apartheid".

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Source: [Green Left](#).

PS:

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