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Executive Council Policy Statement – Internationalism

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) is part of the working-class movement and, linking itself with the international trade union and labour movement, has as its ultimate aim the bringing about of the socialist system of society.

Internationalism has shaped our history and continues to guide our future. In an increasingly unstable world, solidarity across borders is not optional, it is essential to defending our members and advancing the interests of working people.

The world today

The FBU operates in a globally interconnected system. Production, finance, supply chains and political decisions cross borders. Employers coordinate internationally. Governments act within global alliances and institutions. Decisions taken in one country can affect workers' jobs, pay, safety and rights in another.

If capital operates globally, workers must cooperate globally. Internationalism is therefore a practical necessity.

At the same time, humanity faces shared environmental limits. Climate change and environmental degradation are global in cause and local in impact. Floods, wildfires and extreme weather increasingly shape the operational reality of firefighters and the lives of working-class communities.

Across many regions, trade union freedoms and democratic rights are under pressure. In some countries independent unions are suppressed. In others, public services are weakened and workers' rights eroded. Armed conflicts continue to devastate civilian populations and place emergency workers at severe risk.

The FBU's position is clear and consistent: we stand for peace, equality, democratic freedoms and the right of peoples to determine their own futures. We do not align ourselves with governments - we stand in solidarity with workers.

Firefighting and solidarity

Firefighting is a global profession. In every country, firefighters respond to emergencies arising from industrial activity, environmental crisis, infrastructure failure and, in some regions, conflict.

While conditions differ, firefighters share common interests: safe systems of work, proper training, adequate resources, high-quality protective equipment, and recognition of occupational health risks, including cancer and trauma.

Cooperation between firefighter unions strengthens professional standards and improves safety. Shared experience across borders has helped advance work on health and safety, occupational disease recognition and emerging operational threats. Firefighter-to-firefighter solidarity is a core part of our internationalism.

But our internationalism does not stop at our profession. The FBU is part of a global labour movement stretching back generations. Without international trade union rights, workers in one country are played off against those in another. When workers organise across borders, all are strengthened.

The FBU's tradition

The FBU has long maintained strong relationships with firefighter unions and representative bodies internationally. Through bilateral links and participation in European and global networks, we cooperate on professional standards, health and safety and collective bargaining.

We have also consistently supported workers and communities facing repression, discrimination, conflict or humanitarian crisis. The union has opposed racism, apartheid and collective punishment wherever they occur. Our approach has always been grounded in solidarity between working people.

Internationalism is not about entering geopolitical blocs or endorsing states. It is about upholding consistent principles: trade union rights, equality, human dignity and self-determination.

Why this matters now

There is increasing pressure in many countries to retreat into narrow nationalism. At the same time, employers and markets continue to operate globally. Competition between workers is encouraged while corporate power becomes more coordinated.

For firefighters and other workers, these global dynamics have real consequences:

- climate-driven emergencies increase operational demand and risk
- international supply chains affect equipment and safety standards
- political instability shapes public service funding and worker protections
- conflicts and crises endanger civilians and emergency responders alike.

An international union recognises these connections. Defending pay, safety and democratic rights in one country reinforces them elsewhere. Progress made internationally strengthens us domestically.

Practical solidarity

Conference reaffirms that internationalism remains a guiding principle of the FBU.

1. The FBU will strengthen links with firefighter unions and representative bodies globally, promoting cooperation on health and safety, professional standards and collective bargaining.

2. The FBU will continue to defend the universal right to independent trade union organisation and support workers in struggle in the UK and internationally.
3. The FBU will stand in solidarity with workers and communities facing war, repression, discrimination or humanitarian crisis.
4. The FBU will oppose authoritarianism and attacks on trade union and democratic rights wherever they occur.
5. The FBU will ensure its affiliations, donations and partnerships reflect our commitment to international solidarity, equality and self-determination.

Internationalism flows from who we are: a democratic trade union in a global profession and part of a wider global labour movement.

By standing together across borders, as firefighters and as workers we strengthen our union and the values it represents.

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