



International Solidarity:  
Fórsa in action

Fórsa is committed to a fairer and more just society, and works to better workers' rights, quality public services, human rights and equality across Europe and the globe. International solidarity is a cornerstone of the union, and the long established Fórsa Developing World Fund provides ongoing support to education, development, and human rights projects globally.

Funded by 3% of every member's union subscription, the Fórsa Developing World Fund gives over €600,000 a year to projects around the world, allowing the union to make ongoing contributions to human rights and development, as well as responding to humanitarian emergencies. Proceeds from the Developing World Fund are distributed through trade union federations like PSI, key Irish charities (like Concern, GOAL, Trócaire, Irish Red Cross etc.) and other smaller NGOs, delivering focused campaigns. All donations are measured against strict Fórsa criteria aimed at ensuring maximum impact, in line with our values, and are rigorously monitored.

Since 2022, organisations including Self Help Africa, Concern Worldwide, Turkey/Syria ITUC Emergency Appeal, Vita Ireland, Justice for Columbia, the Irish Red Cross, UNICEF, PSI International Projects and Tír nan Óg Children's Foundation have been supported through this fund. In the period 2022 and 2023 Fórsa supported international solidarity projects with over €1.3 million in funding.

**In 2022 and 2023, Fórsa has contributed over €1.3 million in funding to:**

- Concern
- Irish Red Cross
- Schools and Health Foundation
- Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
- Tír na nÓg Children's Foundation
- Turkey/Syria ITUC Emergency Appeal
- Justice for Colombia
- Gorta Self Help Africa
- Vita Ireland
- Unicef
- Public Services International

## Fórsa International Affiliations

Fórsa is affiliated to, and plays an active role in, the following international trade union federations: Public Services International (PSI), the European Federation of Public Service Trade Unions (EPSU), the International Transport Federation (ITF), the European Transport Federation (ETF), and Uni Global Union.

Fórsa is also one of the active international trade union affiliates of the Justice for Colombia (JfC) campaign. JfC was set up in 2002 by the trade union movement to support Colombian civil society in its struggle for human rights, labour rights, peace, and social justice.

Fórsa plays a leading role in Trade Union Friends of Palestine (TUFOP). Established by ICTU in 2007, the group works within the trade union movement to educate members and highlight the injustices inflicted on the Palestinian people, to promote further policy motions to help address Israeli human rights abuses, and to mobilise solidarity activity.

## Fórsa International Solidarity Projects

*Here are just some of the projects Fórsa has helped through its Developing World Fund*



**Workers in Nepal organising for power.**

With Fórsa's support, PSI fights for a stronger democratic state and an inclusive society, where gender equality, respect and dignity for all are at its core, and where inclusive economic development, redistribution of wealth and strengthened workers' power are central.

### Public Services International

Fórsa makes a significant contribution to Public Services International (PSI), a Global Union Federation of more than 700 trade unions representing 30 million workers in 154 countries. PSI brings the voice of public service workers to the UN, ILO, WHO and other regional and global organisations, defends public service trade union and workers' rights and fights for universal access to quality public services and social justice.

Eighteen projects have been implemented since 2022 with Fórsa's backing. These include:

- Organising and capacity building for union rights and collective bargaining for workers in Nepal
- Occupational health and safety capacity building in Zimbabwe
- Trade union rights campaigns in Kenya
- Organising and building the capacity of workers in the waste management sector in Tanzania
- Keeping water in public ownership in Cameroon
- Organising lady health workers in Pakistan
- Social organisation of care and the fight against gender-based violence in the world of work of public services in Latin America.

Fórsa also provides essential support to PSI's work on migration and refugee issues, a matter of priority for both organisations. With Fórsa's help, PSI works to:

- Defend migrant workers' right to decent work
- Migrant workers in public services
- Influencing global migration policy
- Health workers migration.

Through trade union supported projects, PSI puts people over profit, and develops a unique perspective and plan on global challenges.

## Justice for Colombia

Justice for Colombia (JfC) was established by the trade union movement to support Colombian civil society in its struggle for human rights, labour rights, peace and social justice. Colombia is the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist. More than 3,000 trade unionists have been murdered since 1989 - more than in the rest of the world combined.

Fórsa is one of the active international trade union affiliates of the Justice for Colombia campaign, and provides ongoing solidarity, support, and funding in respect of this work.

JfC responds to the ongoing demands of their partners in Colombia: the political activists, trade unionists, peasant organisations, human rights defenders, and other civil society groups who are on the front line in demanding peace and social justice.

In 2023, Fórsa partnered with JfC to provide psychosocial support for human rights defenders, social leaders, and people deprived of freedom in the framework of social protest. This support was also extended to their families. As part of this work, JfC has also carried out interviews and workshops with the prisoners and their families to learn about their needs, interests and expectations in relation to the project.



## Vita Ireland

Vita Ireland is another organisation aided by Fórsa's commitment to international solidarity. Vita Ireland has worked to support farmers and communities in Africa for thirty-five years. Their goal is to facilitate thriving rural climate-smart economies in Africa with access to services, markets and livelihoods for all, through community-led programmes with an emphasis on gender and social equality. These ground-up initiatives include climate-smart agriculture such as the innovative Irish Potato Coalition and the female-driven fuel-efficient cook stoves programme as well as community waterpoint repair programme.

Through members contributions, Fórsa has helped to fund projects in Eritrea. A major focus of Vita's work in Eritrea to date has been developing community-based seed multiplication systems, working closely with local researchers and extension workers in the Ministry of Agriculture and leveraging the expertise of Teagasc and

Self Help Africa. These projects continue to work with clusters of farmers to grow high-quality potato, wheat, and pearl millet seed, improving access to clean, quality seed for the wider farming community and contributing to improved livelihoods and food security.

The union's assistance has also contributed to the improved efficiency stoves programme, which has seen over 16,000 people benefit since 2016. This programme has developed an adaptation of the traditional household stove used across Eritrea, and are built by local women, using locally available supplies. Vita trains women in the construction techniques required for building the stoves. As the stoves only use half the fuel of traditional cooking stoves, less fuel is required, and less smoke is emitted. This means fewer trees need to be felled for a community's energy requirements and less time is spent collecting firewood. This in turn allows women and children to spend more time doing other household tasks, studying, participating in income-generating activities, and participating in the social and civic life of their community.

## Humanitarian response and international solidarity

### Support for Ukraine

In March 2022, and in the wake of the war on Ukraine, Fórsa donated half a million euro to two organisations providing humanitarian relief to people who've been displaced by Russia's illegal invasion.

The union's Ukraine Appeal raised almost €250,000 in donations from Fórsa members and branches. Almost 2,000 individual Fórsa members made contributions, along with 98 of the union's 200 branches. On foot of this outpouring of support, Fórsa's National Executive Committee made the decision to top up the amount from the union's Developing World Fund to bring the total raised to €500,000.

The proceeds of the Fórsa appeal were shared equally between the Irish Red Cross and a special trade union solidarity fund jointly established by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). Each of these appeals is providing ongoing humanitarian support on the ground. On receipt of this donation Irish Red Cross Secretary General Liam O'Dwyer thanked the generosity of Fórsa members and said that the Fórsa aid will directly support the emergency provision of water, food, medical aid and treatment, and shelter.

ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow reflected that "the deep humanity of the men and women of Fórsa is demonstrated through their generosity in support of unions in Ukraine, who are providing refuge and essential supplies to those in need, and to unions in neighbouring countries who are providing support to Ukrainian refugees".

### Fórsa Gaza appeal and UNICEF

Fórsa has donated €100,000 to the UNICEF's Gaza Crisis Emergency Fund, with proceeds helping to provide humanitarian relief to the Palestinian people following Israel's ongoing war and continued bombardment of Gaza. The donation was made following a meeting of the union's National Executive Committee (NEC) in November 2023 as part of the urgent humanitarian appeal. In addition, branches and members raised a further €32,000 for the UNICEF appeal. UNICEF Executive Director Peter Power has said that these funds will allow the organisation's global logistics supply chain to scale up operations on the ground in support of the team inside Gaza.

Amidst continued airstrikes, fuel shortages, communications blocks and attacks on medical and humanitarian personnel and facilities, UNICEF continues to operate and respond to complex and growing needs. They persist in delivering aid by being physically present on the ground, coordinating with other humanitarian organisations and a range of trusted partners, working to prevent more deaths through their work on nutrition and child protection.

With Fórsa's support, UNICEF has been able to transport significant humanitarian assistance to Egypt for onward delivery through the Rafah border crossing. UNICEF's efforts, including eleven airlifts, have been among the first deliveries to pass through Rafah, reaching those in need with unprecedented speed. The funding has also contributed to UNICEF providing clean and safe water, hygiene dignity kits, tents and bedding, medicines, and food to the people of Gaza.

Since November 2023, Fórsa has participated in weekly demonstrations across the country, calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. The union continues to monitor the devastating humanitarian impact of the war on the people of Gaza and the West Bank.

