

## CITY COUNCIL MEETING – 1<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2023

### RESOLUTION ON THE ITEM REGARDING “STOPPING GENOCIDE IN GAZA”

#### **1. STOPPING GENOCIDE IN GAZA**

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

(a) notes:-

- (i) its unanimous vote in September 2019 to recognise Palestine as a sovereign state, the first Council to do so;
- (ii) that East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Golan Heights and Gaza are illegally occupied by Israel; and that Gaza has been subject to 16 years of blockade;
- (iii) that the Israeli Government has been withholding essential resources from Gaza and what UN Experts have described as “destroying or damaging homes, hospitals, markets and UN Reliefs and Works Agency (UNRWA)” and that Amnesty International has “documented unlawful Israeli attacks, including indiscriminate attacks, which caused mass civilian casualties and must be investigated as war crimes”;
- (iv) Save The Children have highlighted that the number of children reported killed in Gaza in the last three weeks has surpassed the annual number of children killed across the world's conflict zones since 2019;
- (v) that under Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, genocide is defined as certain acts “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group” and that, under Article I, the UK has confirmed that genocide is a crime under international law which it undertakes to prevent and to punish;
- (vi) the UK, at the UN Security Council on 18 October 2023, refused to vote for “humanitarian pauses” to deliver lifesaving aid to millions in Gaza; and
- (vii) Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, B'tselem and the South African government recognise that the Israeli Government is enacting a system of apartheid;

(b) deeply regrets and condemns the tragic loss of civilian life in both the Hamas terrorist attacks on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October and the ensuing bombardment of the Gaza strip by Israel;

- (c) notes that these horrific events have had a huge effect on many Sheffield citizens, in particular those with relatives and friends in the region;
- (d) calls for the immediate release of all Israeli hostages;
- (e) believes:-
  - (i) there can be no justification for the loss of innocent lives, and all atrocities committed against civilians must be condemned and investigated;
  - (ii) that Hamas' appalling murder of civilians in Israel must be unequivocally condemned, and we continue to call for the safe release of all hostages;
  - (iii) that the Israeli Government's indiscriminate killing of Palestinian civilians must be unequivocally condemned;
  - (iv) all forms of racism, including anti-Palestinian racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia have no place in our city and condemns any attacks on Palestinian, Jewish or Muslim people;
  - (v) Sir Keir Starmer was wrong to say, in an interview with LBC radio, that Israel "does have that right" to withhold food, water and electricity from Gaza, and he should apologise and retract this statement supporting collective punishment;
  - (vi) we must not allow these tragic events to divide our communities at home, and we understand and feel the pain of all people in Sheffield, especially the Muslim, Jewish and Christian communities;
  - (vii) all political leaders have a responsibility to try to prevent genocide;
  - (viii) all UK political leaders must call upon the Israeli Government to ensure enough food, water, medicine and electricity is provided to Gaza, that there must be clear humanitarian corridors, and that all actors must follow and be held accountable under international law;
  - (ix) every effort must be made by the international community to make a two-state solution a reality, which requires a commitment to a formal peace process, an end to the occupation and for all parties to follow international law, in order to bring peace to the region;
  - (x) that where Palestinians are forced to flee, they must not be permanently displaced from their homes, and calls on the UK Government to use all available pressure to ensure this;
  - (xi) any state has a right to protect its citizens from attacks and terror, subject to international law;
  - (xii) there is ultimately no military solution to this conflict;

- (xiii) innocent Palestinians must not pay the price for Hamas atrocities; and
- (xiv) the world has a duty to prevent civilian deaths;
- (f) regrets any hurt caused by flying the Israeli flag from the Town Hall, and calls for a review of the Council's flag-flying protocol;
- (g) regrets the UK Government's abstention at the UN against supporting a sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities;
- (h) condemns the decision by Israel to cut off essential supplies of water, food, and electricity, to the 2.2m residents of the Gaza strip;
- (i) condemns all hate crime against Palestinians, Israelis, Jewish or Muslim people;
- (j) welcomes the generous humanitarian fundraising from Sheffield communities over the last few days, in particular fundraising for aid to Gaza;
- (k) affirms its support for a two state solution and a lasting peace, which will allow the people of Israel and Palestine to live free from fear; and
- (l) therefore resolves to:-
  - (i) call upon the UK Government to:-
    - (A) call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, in order to facilitate an intense period of diplomacy, bring humanitarian aid into Gaza, and provide an opportunity to seek the immediate release of all Israeli hostages;
    - (B) call for an immediate ceasefire and to vote for this at the UN;
    - (C) cease all arms sales to Israel and end military aid for Israel; and
    - (D) make every effort to resume the peace process;
  - (ii) request that the Chief Executive submits this Motion to the UK Government; and
  - (iii) request that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee consider whether the Council should join the Sheffield Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid.

**Chief Executive: Kate Josephs**

Town Hall · Sheffield · S1 2HH  
Email: chief.executive@sheffield.gov.uk



**Our ref: KJ/CM**

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

The Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak MP  
Prime Minister  
Prime Minister's Office  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

Dear Mr. Sunak,

**“STOPPING GENOCIDE IN GAZA”**

I have been requested to inform you of the following resolution that was passed by the City Council at its meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023:-

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes:-
- (i) its unanimous vote in September 2019 to recognise Palestine as a sovereign state, the first Council to do so;
  - (ii) that East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Golan Heights and Gaza are illegally occupied by Israel; and that Gaza has been subject to 16 years of blockade;
  - (iii) that the Israeli Government has been withholding essential resources from Gaza and what UN Experts have described as “destroying or damaging homes, hospitals, markets and UN Reliefs and Works Agency (UNRWA)” and that Amnesty International has “documented unlawful Israeli attacks, including indiscriminate attacks, which caused mass civilian casualties and must be investigated as war crimes”;
  - (iv) Save The Children have highlighted that the number of children reported killed in Gaza in the last three weeks has surpassed the annual number of children killed across the world's conflict zones since 2019;
  - (v) that under Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, genocide is defined as certain acts “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or

- religious group” and that, under Article I, the UK has confirmed that genocide is a crime under international law which it undertakes to prevent and to punish;
- (vi) the UK, at the UN Security Council on 18 October 2023, refused to vote for “humanitarian pauses” to deliver lifesaving aid to millions in Gaza; and
  - (vii) Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, B’tselem and the South African government recognise that the Israeli Government is enacting a system of apartheid;
- (b) deeply regrets and condemns the tragic loss of civilian life in both the Hamas terrorist attacks on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October and the ensuing bombardment of the Gaza strip by Israel;
  - (c) notes that these horrific events have had a huge effect on many Sheffield citizens, in particular those with relatives and friends in the region;
  - (d) calls for the immediate release of all Israeli hostages;
  - (e) believes:-
    - (i) there can be no justification for the loss of innocent lives, and all atrocities committed against civilians must be condemned and investigated;
    - (ii) that Hamas’ appalling murder of civilians in Israel must be unequivocally condemned, and we continue to call for the safe release of all hostages;
    - (iii) that the Israeli Government’s indiscriminate killing of Palestinian civilians must be unequivocally condemned;
    - (iv) all forms of racism, including anti-Palestinian racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia have no place in our city and condemns any attacks on Palestinian, Jewish or Muslim people;
    - (v) Sir Keir Starmer was wrong to say, in an interview with LBC radio, that Israel “does have that right” to withhold food, water and electricity from Gaza, and he should apologise and retract this statement supporting collective punishment;
    - (vi) we must not allow these tragic events to divide our communities at home, and we understand and feel the pain of all people in Sheffield, especially the Muslim, Jewish and Christian communities;
    - (vii) all political leaders have a responsibility to try to prevent genocide;
    - (viii) all UK political leaders must call upon the Israeli Government to ensure enough food, water, medicine and electricity is provided to Gaza, that

there must be clear humanitarian corridors, and that all actors must follow and be held accountable under international law;

- (ix) every effort must be made by the international community to make a two-state solution a reality, which requires a commitment to a formal peace process, an end to the occupation and for all parties to follow international law, in order to bring peace to the region;
  - (x) that where Palestinians are forced to flee, they must not be permanently displaced from their homes, and calls on the UK Government to use all available pressure to ensure this;
  - (xi) any state has a right to protect its citizens from attacks and terror, subject to international law;
  - (xii) there is ultimately no military solution to this conflict;
  - (xiii) innocent Palestinians must not pay the price for Hamas atrocities; and
  - (xiv) the world has a duty to prevent civilian deaths;
- (f) regrets any hurt caused by flying the Israeli flag from the Town Hall, and calls for a review of the Council's flag-flying protocol;
  - (g) regrets the UK Government's abstention at the UN against supporting a sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities;
  - (h) condemns the decision by Israel to cut off essential supplies of water, food, and electricity, to the 2.2m residents of the Gaza strip;
  - (i) condemns all hate crime against Palestinians, Israelis, Jewish or Muslim people;
  - (j) welcomes the generous humanitarian fundraising from Sheffield communities over the last few days, in particular fundraising for aid to Gaza;
  - (k) affirms its support for a two state solution and a lasting peace, which will allow the people of Israel and Palestine to live free from fear; and
  - (l) therefore resolves to:-
    - (i) call upon the UK Government to:-
      - (A) call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, in order to facilitate an intense period of diplomacy, bring humanitarian aid into Gaza, and provide an opportunity to seek the immediate release of all Israeli hostages;
      - (B) call for an immediate ceasefire and to vote for this at the UN;
      - (C) cease all arms sales to Israel and end military aid for Israel; and

- (D) make every effort to resume the peace process;
- (ii) request that the Chief Executive submits this Motion to the UK Government; and
- (iii) request that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee consider whether the Council should join the Sheffield Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Josephs', written in a cursive style.

**Kate Josephs CB**  
**Chief Executive**



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office



*received 27/11  
S. Sum  
J. J. J.  
to F. J. J.  
J. J. J.*

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon  
Minister of State (Middle East,  
North Africa, South Asia,  
Commonwealth and the UN)**

**Prime Minister's Special  
Representative on Preventing  
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Kate Josephs CB,  
Chief Executive.

Sheffield Town Hall  
Pinstone Street  
Sheffield  
S1 2HH

Our ref: MC2023/22357

22 November 2023

*Dear Kate Josephs,*

Thank you for your correspondence of 8 November to the Prime Minister about a resolution passed by Sheffield City Council on 1 November about the conflict in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). I am replying as the Minister of State for the Middle East.

A tragedy is unfolding in the Middle East. Israel has suffered the worst terror attack in its history and Palestinian civilians in Gaza are suffering a devastating and growing humanitarian crisis. The UK condemns the terrorist acts perpetrated by Hamas against Israeli and international citizens. Hamas is a terrorist organisation, which neither speaks for nor acts in the interests of the Palestinian people. Hamas can have no future in the leadership of Gaza after their appalling terrorist attacks.

The UK supports Israel's right to defend itself in line with international humanitarian law. We have pressed Israel to ensure its campaign is targeted against Hamas leaders and military infrastructure; to allow aid to enter Gaza; to end settler violence; and to work with the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to improve the desperate humanitarian situation. It is vital that all parties ensure that their actions are proportionate, necessary and minimise harm to civilians.



From the start we have said that we want British nationals to be able to leave Gaza and for humanitarian aid to reach Gaza. We are therefore calling for humanitarian pauses to facilitate delivery of critical humanitarian aid and, crucially, to allow hostages and British nationals to leave. More than 200 people registered with us, including British Nationals and their dependents have so far left Gaza. We are urgently exploring all diplomatic options and all practical routes, working with the UN and partners in the region and beyond. A full ceasefire would only serve to benefit Hamas and allow them to entrench their position

The UK is working intensively to get much greater amounts of aid into Gaza. We need a collective international effort to get aid in as fast as possible - including food, water, and fuel and medical supplies - by as many routes as possible. The UK has committed to an additional £30 million of aid for Gaza, more than doubling our existing aid commitment for this year (£27 million), pre-positioning supplies in Egypt.

To prevent further conflict and terrorism, there must be a lasting political solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict: a two-state solution which provides peace, justice and security for both Israelis and Palestinians. The UK will work urgently with our partners to ensure this vision finally becomes a reality. We are also urging all sides to de-escalate tension in the West Bank and tackle all forms of extremism. We will oppose any attempts by malign actors to cause further escalation in the region.

As the Prime Minister has said, we are investing more deeply in regional stability and in the two-state solution. The Prime Minister, former Foreign Secretary, current Foreign Secretary and Ministers have spoken to counterparts across the region to underline the need to work together and avoid any further spread of conflict. This includes the King of Jordan, the President of Egypt, the Prime Minister of Israel, Palestinian Authority President Abbas, the President of Turkey, the Amir of Qatar, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, the UN Secretary General and the leaders of France, Canada, Italy, the USA and Germany. The former Foreign Secretary visited Israel on 11 October, Egypt on 19 October, attended a summit convened by President Sisi in Egypt on 21 October, visited the United Arab Emirates on 30 October and met seven Arab League Foreign Ministers in Riyadh on 9 November. The Foreign Secretary spoke separately with the Israeli Foreign Minister and the Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister on 17 November and Minister Mitchell visited Egypt on 15 November.

I spoke to the UN General Assembly in New York on Israel-Gaza Crisis and met representatives from the UN, Egypt, Jordan, UAE and the Palestinian Authority on 26/27 October. I have also reached out to our partners in the region, including with Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Morocco, Bahrain and Lebanon. I visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 1-2 November.

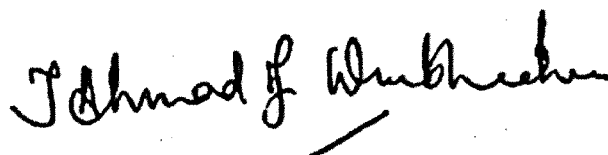
In all our engagements with Israeli counterparts we have underscored the UK's firm belief in Israel's right to self-defence in accordance with International Humanitarian Law. Israel has a duty to minimise civilian casualties and we have called on Israel to take every possible precaution to avoid harming civilians. Humanity, rule of law, decency and the respect for human life is what sets us apart from the mindless violence of the terrorist.

The UK's position on international law is unwavering and we continue to make clear to all parties that all possible measures must be taken to ensure civilian casualties are minimised and to facilitate humanitarian aid to the civilians in Gaza. The Prime Minister has raised directly with his Israeli counterparts the need to act in line with International Humanitarian Law. Israeli President Regev has also said Israel will abide by international law.

With regards to UK-Israeli arms sales: the government continues to monitor closely the situation in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, and if extant licences are found to be no longer consistent with the Criteria, those licences will be revoked. The UK Government does not believe that imposing a blanket arms embargo would lead to progress in the peace process. The Government takes its defence export responsibilities extremely seriously and operates some of the most robust export controls in the world. All applications for export licences are assessed on a case-by-case basis against strict criteria. We will not issue a licence if there is a clear risk that the equipment might be used for internal repression.

We are also clear that peace, security and stability for Israelis and Palestinians alike can only be achieved through a collaborative and concerted effort towards a two-state solution; a secure Israel, living side by side with an independent, secure and viable Palestinian state.

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name "Ahmad".

**LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON**

Minister of State

Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict