

Notice of Motion – Israel/Palestine Conflict

This Council:

Expresses deep sympathy for all those who have suffered or been affected by the long Israel / Palestine conflict. To those in the Borough of Maidstone who have been particularly affected by this conflict we offer our thoughts and support in this difficult time.

Condemns the murder and friendly-fire deaths of Israeli civilians, the taking of hostages by Hamas and latest upsurge in the wholesale slaughter of Gazan residents and associated destruction of property and infrastructure by Israeli Occupation Forces, with deaths potentially exceeding 186,000 according to a recent study in the Lancet.

Condemns the Israeli government for its brutal occupation, ethnic cleansing, settlement and long-running injustices against the indigenous Palestinian population, and latterly its disproportionate response to the 7th Oct attack.

Notes the United Kingdom's central role and culpability for the long-running destabilisation and conflict that has blighted the region, including the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1917 Balfour Declaration and more recent foreign policy adventures.

Believes that the urgent priority must be to stop the deaths and suffering of any more civilians in Gaza, the West Bank, Israel and the wider region.

Notes that the International Court of Justice has 26th January 2024 ruling that there is a 'plausible risk of a genocide' in Gaza and 19th July 2024 ruling that all third parties must end political, legal and material support for the illegal occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, adding that Israel's legislation and measures violate the international prohibition on racial segregation and apartheid.

Hopes for an immediate further release of all hostages and release of Palestinians held without charge and an immediate permanent ceasefire to allow more aid and the possibility of a peaceful resolution.

Believes that Palestinians have an inalienable right of return, self-government and self-determination.

Believes the tragic recent events in Israel, Gaza, and West Bank and the wider region must not be allowed to divide our communities in Maidstone.

Condemns the increase in anti-Semitic and Islamophobic violence and abuse in the UK and agrees that all forms of racism and prejudice have no place in Maidstone.

The Council resolves to:

- 1) Explore how the Council can better support and facilitate events for people of all faiths and none, where they can come together and express solidarity and sadness in response to these events.
- 2) Offer appropriate support to any local resident who needs our assistance as a result of these violent events.
- 3) Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs to call on the UK Government:
 - a) to press all parties to agree:
 - i) to an urgent permanent, bilateral ceasefire in Gaza, Israel, West Bank and Lebanon and to work tirelessly to resume a just and sustainable peace process;
 - ii) to guarantee that international humanitarian law is upheld and that civilians are protected in accordance with those laws;
 - iii) to allow the Red Cross immediate access to hostages and detainees in Gaza and Israel and to ensure that all aid is allowed into the region including unfettered access to medical supplies, food, electricity, other fuel and water.
 - b) to suspend all arms exports to Israel given the plausible case for genocide and illegality of the occupation of Gaza and West Bank.
 - c) to exercise international advocacy for the right of return and compensation for all Palestinian refugees and their descendants.