

Labour Group Amendment to Oldham Group Motion - Immediate Ceasefire in Gaza

Moved by Councillor Shaid Mushtaq.
Seconded by Councillor Nazrul Islam

Delete

Insert

Background:

As of October 2024, the situation in Gaza has reached a dire humanitarian crisis, with the Gaza Health Ministry reporting that over **42,000** individuals have lost their lives due to ongoing military operations. This includes approximately **14,100 children** and **9,000 women**, indicating a

devastating toll on the civilian population. In addition to the loss of life, the health infrastructure in Gaza has been severely impacted. The

World Health Organisation (WHO) has confirmed that there have been **over 516 verified attacks on healthcare facilities** in the Gaza Strip since the conflict escalated.

The attacks have resulted in significant damage to hospitals, disrupting essential healthcare services and leaving many without access to medical care. The United Nations has expressed deep concern over the escalating violence. Secretary-General António Guterres stated, on 20th October 2024, "The violence must stop immediately," emphasising that "the protection of civilians is paramount."

Furthermore, world leaders have called for an immediate ceasefire. French President Emmanuel Macron stated on 18th October 2024, "We must work together to bring about an immediate ceasefire and ensure the safety of all civilians." Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau echoed this sentiment on 19th October 2024, stating, "Canada calls for an end to hostilities and the protection of human rights in Gaza."

This council called for a ceasefire at the start of the hostilities, and Cllr Arooj Shah called for a ceasefire with other Greater Manchester Leaders on 27th October 2023. Oldham's Mayor Cllr Zahid Chauhan OBE wrote to the former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak MP on 2nd November 2023 telling him that the people of Oldham called for a ceasefire.

The borough's MPs voted for a ceasefire in February 2024, and the ending of hostilities in the region to allow humanitarian aid and a diplomatic solution has been the consistent policy of the UK Government since Sir Keir Starmer became Prime Minister in July 2024.

Since then, Israel has attacked and invaded Lebanon, escalating a conflict and affecting even more innocent civilians, including those here in Oldham with loved ones in the region.

Israel's Parliament has passed legislation banning UNWRA from operating within Israeli occupied territory, including Gaza, the West Bank and occupied

East Jerusalem, preventing a key provider of aid from reaching the people who need it the most during this conflict. This has been condemned by the US State Department, the Secretary General of the UN and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, amongst other international partners.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) raised alarms about the situation on 15th October 2024, indicating that the ongoing actions in Gaza may constitute violations of international law and could be characterised as genocide. The ICJ noted, "All parties must adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law and protect the civilian population."

Humanitarian organisations, including UNICEF, state that "every child in Gaza is in danger," highlighting the urgent need for safe corridors for aid to reach those in need.

Justification:

This motion is brought to the council as a matter of urgency due to the following reasons:

- 1. Humanitarian Responsibility:** As representatives of our community, we have a moral obligation to advocate for the protection of human rights and the welfare of civilians in conflict zones. The ongoing violence in Gaza has led to a humanitarian catastrophe that requires immediate action.
- 2. International Law:** The situation in Gaza poses serious questions regarding adherence to international humanitarian law. By passing this motion, the council can reaffirm its commitment to upholding these principles and advocate for accountability on the global stage.
- 3. Community Sentiment:** There is a growing concern among constituents regarding the ongoing conflict and its humanitarian impact. Bringing this motion forward allows the council to express solidarity with affected populations and demonstrate responsiveness to community concerns.
- 4. Global Leadership:** The motion aligns with the calls from world leaders and international organisations for immediate action. By taking a stand, the council can contribute to a collective global response aimed at de-escalating the conflict and ensuring the protection of civilians.

In light of these developments, the council resolves to:

1. Call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, urging all parties involved to halt hostilities, **and** prioritise the protection of civilian lives **and the immediate release of the Israeli hostages taken on the 7th October 2023.**
2. Support the rapid entry of humanitarian aid to address the urgent needs of the population affected by the ongoing conflict.
3. ~~Call and enforce a ban on the supply of military equipment specifically used to bomb Palestinian civilians, while allowing for the entry of supplies intended solely for genuine defence purposes.~~ **Support the UK Government's decision to withdraw export licences to Israel, preventing**

equipment that would be used in the conflict in Gaza from reaching the front line.

4. Condemn the decision by the Israeli Knesset to ban the UNWRA from operating in Israeli controlled territory, including Gaza, the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem, noting that this has been met with widespread international condemnation, including from the United States government and the Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer.
5. Condemn both Hamas and Hezbollah for their terrorist attacks on civilians and the taking of hostages by Hamas on October 7th 2023, and support calls from the international community to lay down arms and instead work with international partners to reach a diplomatic solution that safeguards innocent civilians in Lebanon, Palestine and Israel.

Furthermore, the council requests that the Chief Executive write to the Prime Minister, urging the UK government to:

1. ~~Call and enforce an immediate ceasefire in international forums.~~ Re-iterate calls for an immediate Ceasefire in both Gaza and Lebanon and work with international partners to achieve this
2. Facilitate the rapid entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza and Lebanon.
3. ~~Meet their moral obligation by suspending all arms sales to Israel until such time that international humanitarian law is observed and respected.~~ Continuously review export licences for international Arms Sales and suspend any that could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of International Humanitarian Law.

Through these actions, the council seeks to contribute to the restoration of peace and the protection of human rights in the region.

Amended motion to read:

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