

Motion on Ceasefire for the humanitarian crisis in Palestine, The West Bank and Israel and immediate release of hostages.

Moved by Lubna Khan

Seconded by Scott Cunliffe

Residents in Burnley including those in the interfaith community are very concerned about what is happening in Palestine and Israel. This issue has been debated regularly by the building bridges in Burnley Forum. As a town we need to continue to work hard on the relationships in the town between all sections of the community. The situation in Palestine and Israel is of direct relevance to building community cohesion in Burnley. We have been approached by residents with strong links to Palestine and Israel who are deeply concerned. It should be noted that there are a number of residents with strong connections and family in the region who are deeply impacted by the conflict.

For many years our Borough has come together to resolve conflicts across social and cultural divides, a fact celebrated through the continuous work of community-based organisations like Building Bridges. Hundreds of our residents are engaged in activities organised by and for residents of diverse backgrounds and beliefs.

We are appalled by the violent conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, that has had severe consequences for civilians in both Israel and Palestine. The unprecedented level of casualties has resulted in countless lives being lost. Each passing day sees a rising toll on lives and a worsening humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. Civilian deaths in Gaza are increasing rapidly due to the relentless Israeli bombardment, retaliating to the horrific attacks by Hamas on October 7th in Israel, which led to 1,400 fatalities and the abduction of civilians.

Many residents from across Burnley have asked us, their representatives, to speak out and call on the UK government to push for an immediate ceasefire to stop the mass killing of civilians in the Israel-Gaza conflict and for the immediate release of all hostages held since October 7th, 2023.

According to recent figures at least 15,271 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed, including 3,561 women and 6,403 children, often through indiscriminate and unlawful attacks. Over half of Gaza's casualties are children, and thousands are missing with many trapped beneath the rubble. Millions face additional displacement, dispossession, and suffering. Over 200 Israeli hostages held by Hamas and other resistance groups in Gaza are in peril, and ongoing indiscriminate rocket fire into Israel poses risks to civilians. Israel's tightened siege on Gaza has blocked essential goods like water, food, and fuel, leaving over 2 million people in the Gaza Strip struggling to survive.

The humanitarian catastrophe resulting from Israel's 16-year-long illegal blockade will escalate further if the fighting doesn't cease immediately.

Serious violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes, persist among all parties involved in the conflict.

Therefore, this council moves that: [SEP]

This Council believes that an immediate ceasefire and the immediate release of hostages is needed to halt the ongoing violence.

We direct the Council Leader and Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to:

1. Urge the Government to work with Israel and Hamas to bring about a negotiation in which we can ensure the immediate release of all hostages.
2. Ask the Government to call for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the Israeli siege of Gaza.
3. Ask the Government to guarantee the prompt opening of aid corridors into Gaza, enabling the delivery of crucial supplies such as food, water, fuel, and life-saving medical equipment to those impacted by the conflict.
4. Urge the United Nations and International Criminal Court to appoint independent arbitrators to assess the validity of evidence of war crimes.
5. Urge all parties to collaborate on achieving peace , enabling the establishment of a recognised and sovereign Palestine alongside a secure and sovereign Israel. Advocate for the appointment of a British special envoy to collaborate with the United Nations (UN) and other stakeholders, expediting the peace process in alignment with the Oslo Accords and preceding UN resolutions.
6. Ask the Government to consider the wider refugee implications of Palestinian displacement and that an international resettlement scheme is negotiated.