

Motion to End the Violence in Israel-Palestine, Support Palestinian Rights, Protect Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression and Oppose all Racism

Bristol UCU notes:

1. The recent upsurge in appalling violence in Israel-Palestine has claimed around 1300 Israeli lives and over 8000 Palestinian ones (at the time of writing); and is causing the on-going displacement of more than half a million people in the Gaza Strip;
2. The Nakba, the violent displacement of Palestinian people from their land by Israel, has been ongoing since 1948. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank have been living under Israeli military occupation since 1967, whilst Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have been living under an Israeli-Egyptian blockade since 2007;
3. Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, B'Tselem, Al-Haq and the past four out of five UN Special Rapporteurs on the state of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory have stated that Palestinians are living under a regime of apartheid;
4. The UK government is complicit in the dispossession of Palestinians and has actively endorsed and materially supported this ongoing regime of apartheid and the current war crimes and crimes against humanity being carried out by Israel against the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territory;
5. This complicity has also entailed increasingly aggressive attempts to censor people demanding an end to Palestinian oppression, and to curtail academic freedom as has been highlighted by the British Society for Middle East Studies and UCU national.
6. Increases in racism, including antisemitism and Islamophobia, in the UK and beyond.
7. UCU national supports the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Friends of Bir Zeit University

Bristol UCU believes that:

1. We must condemn the attacks of 7 October on Israeli civilians;
2. We must condemn the indiscriminate attacks conducted by Israeli armed forces since 7 October on Palestinians
3. The targeting of civilians by any party should be condemned as a war crime;
4. Israel's cutting off of the entry of supplies to Gaza, which has left civilians without food, water, electricity, and medical aid; its targeting of civilians, hospitals, schools and other civilian infrastructure; and its attempts to forcibly transfer the population from the north of Gaza, may amount to ethnic cleansing;
5. To break the cycle of violence, Israeli occupation and apartheid must end and the internationally-recognised rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination must be realised;

6. It is unacceptable to equate all Jewish people with the Israeli state, and it is unacceptable to equate all Palestinians and Arabs with Hamas. Members should be able to express support for Palestinians and Palestine as well as Israelis and Israel, and everyone must be free to criticize governments around the world. In this case in particular, it is important that people are able to criticize the Israeli government without accusations of antisemitism;

7. Trade unions can play a role in pressuring the UK government to end its complicity in the on-going occupation of Palestine, the expansion of settlement construction and the war crimes committed against the Palestinian people;

8. UK universities, including the University of Bristol, must not be complicit with war crimes and crimes against humanity and must immediately end all ties with entities involved in the perpetration of grave violations of human rights, including developing weaponry, military doctrines and legal justifications for the mass targeting of Palestinians.

Bristol UCU resolves to:

1. Donate £1000 to the humanitarian organisation Medical Aid for Palestinians;

2. Support and raise awareness of all efforts to call for an immediate ceasefire in Israel-Palestine and for the UK government to stop selling weapons to Israel. These efforts may include, but are not limited to, teach-outs, walk-outs, petitions, protests, support in promoting such events, allowing the use of the Bristol UCU banner, and the sending of solidarity messages and delegates from the Branch;

3. Affiliate with the Bristol branch of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign;

4. Circulate details to members of the campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel, including the Palestinian Academic Campaign for the Cultural and Academic Boycott of Israel;

5. Call on the VC to publicly affirm Bristol University's commitment to protecting academic freedom and freedom of speech with regards to expressions of solidarity with Palestinians and to urge Universities UK to do the same;

6. Call on the VC to respond to the Secretary of State for Education's letter (dated 11 October 2023), pushing back on the dangerous implications of the letter in, using Prevent to condemn international solidarity, stifling the protected right to free speech, and undermining universities' duty of care to all students and staff;

7. Provide support to staff and students censored, harassed, and/or disciplined for expressing support for Palestinian rights;

8. Oppose all forms of racism, including antisemitism and Islamophobia

Proposed by: Eda Yazici, SPAIS

Seconded by: Bridget Anderson, SPAIS

AMENDMENTS

- a. Motion Title. **Add** ‘; Oppose Antisemitism, Islamophobia’ and all Racism; and’ to the Motion Title between ‘...Rights’ and ‘Protect Academic Freedom..’.

Notes. 2. Add ‘the’ before West Bank. Notes. 5. **Delete** ‘This complicity’; replace with ‘The UK government’. Delete ‘also entailed’; replace with ‘engaged in’.

Notes. 6. **Delete** ‘Increases’ and ‘racism, including’. **Add** ‘there has been an increase’ before ‘in’.

Believes. 1. **Add** ‘, and the taking of hostages;’ after ‘...Israeli civilians’.

Add Resolves. 1. ‘Oppose antisemitism, Islamophobia, and all racism;’; note 1 becomes 2, and so on.

Delete Resolves 8.

Proposed: R. Tutin
Seconded: S. D’Evelyn

- i. Believes. 1. **Delete** Believes 1.; **Replace** with ‘We unequivocally condemn the atrocities perpetrated by Hamas and other groups in the attacks that began on 07 October, and the appalling practice of hostage-taking. We reject any attempts to legitimise these crimes. Hamas’s actions are outrages against humanity that represent one of the gravest current threats to peace in the wider region.

Proposed. N. Abel.
Seconded. J Gerlach

- b. Notes. 1. **Add** ‘between 7th October and 10th November, 12,254 Palestinian people have been killed, and 1,245 Israeli people. The conflict has also caused the highest number of United Nations aid worker fatalities ever recorded in a single conflict. A further 30,108 Palestinian people, and 5,431 Israeli people, have been injured’, and ‘We are seeing’ before ‘the on-going displacement...’. **Delete** ‘The recent upsurge in appalling violence in Israel-Palestine has claimed around 1300 Israeli lives and over 8000 Palestinian ones (at the time of writing); and is causing’.

Proposed. R. Tutin

c. Notes. **Add** new Notes. 2, 3 and 4. Notes 2 becomes 5, and so on:

2. International Humanitarian Law includes underpinning principles of “distinction” (between combatants and protected civilians) and “proportionality”;

3. Lord Neuberger (Former President of the UK Supreme Court, and nephew of Rabbi Herman Naftali Neuberger) together with other Jewish lawyers, writing in the Financial Times, notes that international law forbids sieges of civilian populations, and requires combatants to ensure minimum destruction to civilian life and infrastructure. As such, a military response which fails to operate with sufficient care and precision to minimise damage would, if established, constitute a grave violation of international law;

4. Human Rights Watch has verified videos taken in Lebanon and Gaza on 10th and 11th October 2023, respectively, showing multiple airbursts of artillery fired (by the Israeli military) white phosphorus. Protocol III of the Convention on Conventional Weapons prohibits the use of airdropped incendiary weapons in “concentrations of civilians”

Proposed. R. Tutin
Seconded. S. D'Evelyn

d. Notes. 3 and 4. **Delete** Notes. 3 and Notes. 4. Believes 4. **Delete** ‘may amount to ethnic cleansing’ (*replaced in amendment (f) below with ‘amount to collective punishment and as such are grave violations of international humanitarian law’*). Believes 5. **Delete** ‘and apartheid’.

Proposed. R. Tutin
Seconded. S. D'Evelyn

e. Believes. 2. **Delete** ‘indiscriminate attacks conducted by Israeli armed forces since 7 October on Palestinians’. **Add** ‘disproportionate response of the Government of Israel. It has the right to protect its citizens. But in doing so it must fulfil its obligations under international law to operate in a precise manner to minimise harm to civilian populations’ after ‘We must condemn’.

Proposed. R. Tutin
Seconded. Re. Tutin

- f. Believes. 4. **Delete** 'left'; replace with 'deprived'. **Delete** 'without'; replace with 'of'. Add ', putting hundreds of thousands at risk of starvation and disease' between 'medical aid' and '; its targeting'. **Delete** 'civilians,' Add 'amount to collective punishment and as such are grave violations of international humanitarian law' after 'the north of Gaza,').

Believes. 7. **Delete** 'war crimes committed against'; replace with 'collective punishment of'

Proposed. R. Tutin
Seconded. Re. Tutin

- g. Resolves. 2. **Delete** '1000'; replace with '972'. **Add** 'each of the following organisations. The number 972 is symbolic of our concern for innocents across the region, as the international dialling code shared by Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory / State of Palestine:
- the British Shalom-Salaam Trust (which aims to foster positive relations between Jews, Palestinians and other communities living within Israel's 1967 borders, in the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan);
 - Jews for Justice for Palestinians (which is committed to the Palestinians' right to self determination and to their right to a viable state as set out in United Nations resolutions. It also supports the right of Israelis to live in peace and freedom within Israel's 1967 borders) after 'to'

Add, after 'Medical Aid for Palestinians', '(whose vision is a future where all Palestinians can access an effective, sustainable and locally-led system of healthcare, and the full realisation of their rights to health and dignity); and

- UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East)
- h. Notes. 2. Replace 'Palestinian(s)' with "Palestinian peoples".

Notes. 5. Delete 'Palestinian'; add 'of Palestinian peoples' after 'oppression'.

Proposed. R. Tutin
Seconded. Re. Tutin

- ii. **Add** new Notes 7. 'The University of Bristol has teaching, research and recruitment partnerships with a number of arms companies who are complicit

in and profit from the occupation of Palestine and the ongoing assault on Gaza. These include BAE Systems, Rolls Royce, and Thales'. **Add** new Resolves. 9. 'Call on the University Senate to pass a resolution that commits to ending Bristol's partnerships with arms companies, particularly those complicit in and profiting from the occupation of Palestine and assault on Gaza'.

Proposed. C Rossdale
Seconded. E. M. Roberts