

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

BRISTOL UCU NOTES:

1. 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. We are seeing the on-going displacement of more than half a million people in the Gaza Strip.
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”.
5. The Nakba, the violent displacement of Palestinian people from their land by Israel, has been ongoing since 1948. Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank have been living under Israeli military occupation since 1967, whilst Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip have been living under an Israeli-Egyptian blockade since 2007.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. The UK government has engaged in increasingly aggressive attempts to censor people demanding an end to oppression of Palestinian people, and to curtail academic freedom as has been highlighted by the British Society for Middle East Studies and UCU national.
9. There has been an increase in antisemitism and Islamophobia, in the UK and beyond.
10. UCU national supports the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Friends of Birzeit University.

11. 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

BRISTOL UCU BELIEVES THAT:

1. We must condemn the attacks of 7 October on Israeli civilians and the taking of hostages.
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 deprived civilians of food, water, electricity, and medical aid, putting hundreds of thousands at risk of starvation and disease; its targeting of hospitals, schools and other civilian infrastructure; and its attempts to forcibly transfer the population from the north of Gaza, amount to collective punishment and as such are grave violations of international humanitarian law, and 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 Government of Israel or the State of Israel, state, and it is unacceptable to equate all Palestinian people with Hamas. Members should be able to express support for Palestinian people and Palestine as well as Israeli people and Israel, and everyone must be free to criticize governments around the world. In this case, 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 collective punishment of 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 Palestinian people.

BRISTOL UCU RESOLVES TO:

1. Oppose all forms of racism, including antisemitism and Islamophobia.
2. Donate £1,000 to the humanitarian organisation Medical Aid for Palestinians.
3. 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.

4. Affiliate with the Bristol branch of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.
5. 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.
6. 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 Palestinian people and to urge Universities UK to do the same.
7. 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; and;
8. Provide support to staff and students censored, harassed, and/or disciplined for expressing support for Palestinian rights.
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: E. Yazici

Seconded: B. Anderson

MOTION (AS AMENDED) CARRIED