

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

BATH UCU NOTES:

1. 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.
2. 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 Territories (OPT) have stated that Palestinians are living under a regime of apartheid.
3. Between 7th October and 10th January, according to data provided by Slingshot (<https://slingshot.ps>), 23,540 Palestinians have been killed in the ongoing war on Gaza, including 9,600 children and 107 journalists. A further 63,264 Palestinians have been injured and nearly two million internally displaced.
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 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 Territories.
6. 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.
7. There has been an increase in antisemitism and Islamophobia, in the UK and beyond.
8. UCU supports the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Friends of Birzeit University.
9. The University of Bath has teaching, research and recruitment partnerships with a number of defence and 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.

BATH UCU BELIEVES THAT:

1. We must condemn the attacks conducted by Israeli armed forces since 7 October on Palestinians, as well as the attacks of 7 October on Israeli civilians and the taking of hostages.
2. The targeting of civilians by any party should be condemned as a war crime.
3. 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.

4. 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.

5. It is unacceptable to equate all Jewish people with the Government of Israel or the State of Israel, 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.

6. 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.

7. UK universities, including the University of Bath, 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.

BATH 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-OPT 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 Bath UCU banner, and the sending of solidarity messages and delegates from the Branch.

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

6. Investigate further links between the University of Bath and arms companies, particularly those complicit in and profiting from the occupation of Palestine and assault on Gaza.

7. Call on the Vice Chancellor to publicly affirm the University of Bath'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.

8. Call on the Vice Chancellor 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.

9. Call on the Vice Chancellor to commit to ending Bath's partnerships with arms companies, particularly those complicit in and profiting from the occupation of Palestine and assault on Gaza.

Proposer: University of Bath UCU Branch Committee

Second: Ben Radley