



Peace and Justice Commission

ACTION CALENDAR

April 28, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Peace and Justice Commission

Submitted by: Grace Morizawa, Chairperson, Peace and Justice Commission

Subject: Resolution for an Immediate and Permanent Ceasefire in Gaza, and an End to U.S. Military Aid to Israel, and Support for Palestinian Self-Determination

RECOMMENDATION:

- The City of Berkeley Council adopt a resolution for a ceasefire in Gaza, and an end to U.S. military aid to Israel, and support for Palestinian self-determination.
- Send a copy of the resolution to President Joseph R. Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Vice President Kamala Harris, Representative Barbara Lee, Senator Alex Padilla, Senator Laphonza R. Butler, Representative Cori Bush, and Representative Rashida Tlaib.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS:

Many residents of Berkeley have personal connections to family and friends in Israel and/or Palestine, or have lived in those countries themselves, and are deeply affected and traumatized by the last ten months of atrocities; these connections make it painful to talk about the conflict, while at the same time making it imperative to do so.

The City of Berkeley mourns the thousands of people killed before, on, and after October 7, 2023, including almost 45,000 people killed by military action of Gaza – 2% of the total population – and as many as 186,000 additionally killed due to famine and disease in Gaza, and 1,200 in Israel, the majority of all these being civilians.

In the occupied West Bank, the period since October 7, 2023 has seen over 600 Palestinians killed in Israeli military attacks or by settlers while the number of Palestinians held in Israeli detention, often without charge or due process, has skyrocketed. Political assassinations beyond Israel's borders, including mass explosion attacks in Lebanon on September 17th and 18th, 2024, followed by a military invasion of Lebanon, threaten to devolve into regional war which, given the U.S. commitment to defend Israel, could turn into an international war.

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The wages of war are counted not only in the lives lost and the economic cost; war is also demeaning to our culture, corrupting to our politics, increases sexual violence, poisons race relations, destroys the natural environment and harms the mental health of millions; the last year has inflamed the scourges of antisemitism and Islamophobia experienced by members of the Berkeley community, which are likely to worsen as the conflict continues.

September 30, 2024, the Peace and Justice Commission adopted the motion for “Resolution for Immediate and Permanent Ceasefire in Gaza, and an End to U.S. Military Aid to Israel, and Support for Palestinian Self-Determination” was passed with amendments to language in the resolution.

M/S/C: Lippman, Taylor

Ayes: Gonzalez, Jacquelin, Jivan, Lippman, McNeil, Morizawa, Park, Taylor

Noes: Cassidy, Elias, Fink, Guarino, Lee, Mencher, Phillips

Abstain: N/A

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

No identifiable impact

BACKGROUND

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Peace and Justice Commission advises the City Council on all matters relating to the City of Berkeley's role in issues of peace and social justice (Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 3.68.070)

Berkeley is a peace city. Berkeley has a unique history of fighting for peace and universal human rights for at least 65 years; many of these issues were taken on by the Council on the advice of the Peace and Justice Commission.

While the U.S. government has deplored the loss of life in the current conflict, it has continued to supply billions of dollars in lethal aid to Israel, and in fact has approved additional packages of \$14 billion in February and \$20 billion in August 2024, with virtually no conditions, increasing the U.S. responsibility for the massive destruction of Palestinian life in Gaza.

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The \$1.6 million annually in income taxes paid by Berkeley residents that funds Israel's military could otherwise be spent on housing, education, healthcare, and infrastructure for our community.

The most effective way we can contribute to peace with justice in Israel and Palestine is to press our own government to end the sale of weapons and tools that enable devastation.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager takes no position on the content of this recommendation.

CONTACT PERSON

Grace Morizawa, Chairperson, Peace and Justice Commission

Rex Brown, Commission Secretary, (510) 981-7000

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

RESOLUTION FOR AN IMMEDIATE AND PERMANENT CEASEFIRE IN GAZA, AND
AN END TO U.S. MILITARY AID TO ISRAEL, AND SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN
SELF-DETERMINATION

WHEREAS, the Peace and Justice Commission advises the City Council on all matters relating to the City of Berkeley's role in issues of peace and social justice (Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 3.68.070);¹ and

WHEREAS, the Commission's mandate finds that "the wealth that could be spent to help the poor, heal the sick, house the homeless, educate the children, and care for the elderly is now spent on ever more costly weapons of mass destruction;" and

WHEREAS, after careful consideration the Berkeley City Council finds it proper to offer its views on the massive escalation of violence and scope of destruction in Gaza; and

WHEREAS, there are many reasons for the Council to speak out about the Israel-Gaza war, including:

BERKELEY IS A PEACE CITY. Berkeley has a unique history of fighting for peace and universal human rights for at least 65 years; many of these issues were taken on by the Council on the advice of the Peace and Justice Commission. These movements include, among others, "Ban the Bomb" in the early 1960s, the anti-Vietnam/Indochina war movement, "Stop the Draft," opposition to the Contra War in Nicaragua, the Grenada invasion, sister cities, the Gulf War, post-9/11 Forever Wars, and the Impeach Bush, No Military Recruiting at BHS, Conscientious Objectors Day campaigns, and, most recently, a resolution calling for the cessation of Russia's aggression in Ukraine.

THE PERSONAL CONNECTION TO ISRAEL AND PALESTINE. Many residents of Berkeley have personal connections to family and friends in Israel and/or Palestine, or have lived in those countries themselves, and are deeply affected and traumatized by the last ten months of atrocities; these connections make it painful to talk about the conflict, while at the same time making it imperative to do so.

OUR MORAL FIBER. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, speaking about racism in South Africa said, “In a situation of injustice and oppression, there can be no neutrality. You have to take sides. You have to ask yourself, ‘Am I on the side of justice or am I on the side of injustice?’”² Our moral obligation, as a city, is to speak out against the industry of militarism that precipitates thousands of deaths of innocents while eroding our ability to educate, house, and uplift our local communities.

THE THREAT OF A WIDENING WAR. In the occupied West Bank, the period since October 7, 2023, has seen over 600 Palestinians killed in Israeli military attacks or by settlers while the number of Palestinians held in Israeli detention, often without charge or due process, has skyrocketed.³ Political assassinations beyond Israel’s borders, including mass explosion attacks in Lebanon on September 17th and 18th, threaten to devolve into regional war which, given the U.S. commitment to defend Israel, could turn into an international war.⁴ An increasing U.S. military presence, including the arrival of a guided missile submarine and aircraft carrier strike group, contributes to the expanding risk of a broader war that would further erode global peace and security.⁵

A SISTERHOOD OF CITIES. The City of Berkeley has long maintained a connection with cities suffering in war zones; the Peace and Justice Commission’s mandate says, “The intentional destruction of cities in war is the rule and not the exception;” and while the destruction is physical in Gaza City, Rafah and many other cities throughout Gaza, it wounds cities like ours as well, both morally and financially. Speaking on the war in Vietnam, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “The security we profess to seek in foreign adventures we will lose in our decaying cities. The bombs we drop in Vietnam explode at home; they destroy the hopes and possibilities for a decent America.”⁶

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COSTS OF WAR. The wages of war are counted not only in the lives lost and the economic cost; war is also demeaning to our culture, corrupting to our politics, increases sexual violence, poisons race relations, destroys the natural environment and harms the mental health of millions; the last year has inflamed the scourges of antisemitism and Islamophobia experienced by members of the Berkeley community, which are likely to worsen as the conflict continues; other negative effects include an exponential growth in mass surveillance, an increased deployment of militarized force and belligerence in civil society;⁷ and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley mourns the thousands of people killed before, on, and after October 7, 2023, including almost 45,000 people killed by military action – 2% of the total population – and as many as 186,000⁸ additionally killed due to famine and disease in Gaza, and 1,200 in Israel, the majority of all these being civilians; the destruction of all universities and 80% of health and education facilities in Gaza; an 85% unemployment rate; the displacement of 85% of the entire population including 700,000 children; continuous airstrikes on refugee camps, hospitals, schools, mosques, and cultural sites;

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the entire population facing acute food scarcity and imminent famine;⁹ and there is no certainty that the war is coming to a close; and

WHEREAS, the United States has sent more than \$300 billion in military aid to Israel to date, currently \$3.8 billion annually, and approved additional packages of \$14 billion in February and \$20 billion in August 2024, with virtually no conditions, oversight, or accountability, and has increased the transfer of lethal aid during the current war;¹⁰ and

WHEREAS, the \$1.6 million annually in income taxes paid by Berkeley residents that funds Israel's military could otherwise be spent on housing, education, healthcare, and infrastructure for our community;¹¹ and

WHEREAS, the soaring toll of death and destruction in Gaza and the spread of conflict to other fronts around the region sears the conscience of people in Berkeley and around the world, and the United Nations Security Council on June 10, 2024 mandated an immediate, full and complete ceasefire and the release of hostages and prisoners on both sides,¹² to no avail; and

WHEREAS, on September 18th, 2024, the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted the legal advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued on July 19, 2024,¹³ which determined that Israel's occupation since 1967, and the subsequent creation of Israeli settlements and exploitation of natural resources, are illegal under international law;¹⁴ the Court also ruled that Israel should pay reparations to the Palestinian people for the damage caused by the occupation, allow all Palestinians displaced during the occupation to return to their original place of residence – in keeping with the Right of Return outlined in prior UN General Assembly resolutions¹⁵ – and determined that Israeli occupation policies violate the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD);¹⁶ and

WHEREAS, The Elders, a non-profit global group of respected senior leaders founded by Nelson Mandela, went beyond the Security Council resolution in a July statement to “call on political leaders who have influence to use their leverage to end Israel's atrocities in Gaza by suspending arms sales, to secure the immediate release of hostages held by Hamas, and to compel the parties to commit to a permanent ceasefire; and specifically, “All states providing arms to Israel - directly or indirectly - must suspend arms transfers in response to systematic violations of international humanitarian law in Gaza and across the occupied Palestinian territories;”¹⁷ and

WHEREAS, The Elders' statement calls out U.S. practices in particular, stating, “As Israel's closest ally and its largest provider of arms, the United States of America must lead the way;” and

WHEREAS, on January 26, 2024, in the case brought to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) by South Africa and joined by seven other countries, the Court found it plausible that Israel was violating rights guaranteed under the Genocide Convention, including “the

right of the Palestinians in Gaza to be protected from acts of genocide,” issuing provisional measures that Israel has refused to enact; and the ICJ issued stronger follow-up orders on March 28 and May 24, 2024.¹⁸

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that it is not too late to halt and reverse the cycle of war, destruction, and dispossession that have plagued Palestine for more than a century.

The Council recalls its statement in founding the Peace and Justice Commission in 1986 that “it is the responsibility of one and all to labor hard for peace and justice in forums of appropriate scale.”

The uncontrolled war in Israel and Palestine is destructive to peace, security, and the living conditions of all people living in Palestine and Israel. Continuation of war is not in the interests of any group of people in Israel, the region, or around the world any more than it is of the Palestinians.

The Council states that as U.S. citizens and residents, the most effective way we can contribute to peace with justice in Israel and Palestine is to press our own government to end the sale of weapons and tools that enable devastation.

As with a raging wildfire, the withdrawal of such fuel can only promote the reduction of violence, and in so doing create the conditions for peace with justice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Berkeley:

- 1) Urges the Biden administration to immediately end all weapons shipments and military aid to Israel.
- 2) Urges the Biden administration to call for the unrestricted opening of crossings into Gaza in order to allow sufficient humanitarian assistance into the territory and to allow the tens of thousands of grievously injured to access necessary medical treatment without further delay.
- 3) Urges the Biden administration to demand the immediate end of Israel’s illegal occupation of Palestinian territories – the West Bank and East Jerusalem – and an end to the 16-year-long siege and blockade of Gaza in compliance with international law, and full withdrawal from Gaza.
- 4) Condemns the October 7, 2023 attack by Hamas on civilians in Israel, the murders, and the kidnappings.
- 5) Calls for the immediate release of the approximately nine thousand Palestinians including young minors held in administrative detention, as well as all Palestinian political prisoners and all Israeli hostages held in Gaza.

6) Urges the Biden administration to formally recognize the State of Palestine, support its full membership into the United Nations, and affirm the Palestinian right to self-determination through self-governance and the Right of Return.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Berkeley endorses Congressional Resolution 786 (Bush and Tlaib), calling for an immediate permanent ceasefire.¹⁹

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Berkeley vows to combat all forms of hate, including Islamophobia, antisemitism, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian racism, xenophobia, and ethnonationalism.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be sent to President Joseph R. Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Vice President Kamala Harris, Representative Barbara Lee, Senator Alex Padilla, Senator Laphonza R. Butler, Representative Cori Bush, and Representative Rashida Tlaib.

¹ <https://berkeley.municipal.codes/BMC/3.68>

² “Desmond Tutu at Stanford University, January 21, 1986,”
”<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3GnrwSZkLU> (Min. 42:05)

³ “Statistics on Palestinians in Israeli Custody,” June 24, 2024,
https://www.btselem.org/statistics/detainees_and_prisoners

⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-hamas-war-news-lebanon-hezbollah-e3ca9c83642056f962fdf76319e3b8de>

⁵ “On verge of an explosion’: Policeman’s killing part of spiralling West Bank violence,” BBC, August 12, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd735zvg1q9o> and

“In the West Bank, Palestinians Struggle to Adjust to a New Reality,” Feb.2, 2024, The New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/02/world/middleeast/west-bank-palestine-israel.html>

⁶ Martin Luther King Jr.’s moral stance against the Vietnam War offers lessons on how to fight for peace in the Middle East ,” Hajar Yazdiha, *USC Dornsife*, 1-12-2024, <https://dornsife.usc.edu/news/stories/martin-luther-king-vietnam-war/#>

⁷ “Costs of War,” Watson Institute, Brown University, September 2023,
<https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/social>

⁸ “Counting the dead in Gaza: difficult but essential ,” Rasha Khatib, July 20 2024, The Lancet,
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)01169-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)01169-3/fulltext)

⁹ “GAZA STRIP: Famine is imminent as 1.1 million people half of Gaza experience catastrophic food insecurity,” Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/alerts-archive/issue-97/en/>

¹⁰ “U.S. Aid to Israel in Four Charts,” Jonathan Masters, May 31 2024, Council on Foreign Relations,
<https://www.cfr.org/article/us-aid-israel-four-charts>

¹¹ “U.S. Military Funding to Israel Map,” U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights, <https://uscpr.org/activist-resource/us-military-funding-to-israel-map/>

¹² UNSC Resolution 2728. See Robert Barron, US Institute of Peace, 3-26-2024,
<https://www.usip.org/publications/2024/03/what-does-un-cease-fire-resolution-mean-israel-gaza-war>

¹³ <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/ltd/n24/266/48/pdf/n2426648.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-00-en.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-210170/>

¹⁶ “Top UN court says Israeli occupation of West Bank and East Jerusalem is illegal,” CNN, 7-19-2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/19/middleeast/israel-west-bank-jerusalem-occupation-icj-opinion-intl/index.html>

¹⁷ “The Elders call for suspension of arms transfers to Israel to end Gaza atrocities,” 4-4-2024, <https://theelders.org/news/elders-call-suspension-arms-transfers-israel-end-gaza-atrocities>

¹⁸ ICJ Order of 26 January 2024,” <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/203447>
<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/world-court-orders-israel-take-measures-ensure-food-gets-into-gaza-2024-03-28/>

“ICJ Order of 24 May 2024,” <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/204091#:>

¹⁹ <https://bush.house.gov/media/press-releases/calls-for-ceasefire-grow-in-month-following-introduction-of-ceasefire-now-resolution>

