

7.2 LMM 12/12/2023 - PEACE IN ISRAEL & PALESTINE

MOTION

That City of Newcastle:

1. Reiterates our community's strong and ongoing support for Peace, and notes that this week marks the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
2. Acknowledges the concerns of Novocastrians regarding the ongoing Israel-Gaza Crisis, and the profound impact of ongoing hostilities on innocent civilians;
3. Notes that the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Penny Wong, has condemned the 7 October brutal attacks by Hamas as abhorrent acts of terror, recognised the right of Israel to defend itself, expressed deep concern for the loss of Israeli and Palestinian life, stated that Israel must comply with international humanitarian law, and reaffirmed Australia's support for taking the necessary steps towards a ceasefire. We request the Federal Government continue to call for a ceasefire and a return to peaceful negotiations;
4. Notes the UN Women statement on Israel and Gaza of 1 December 2023 which expressed deep regret for the resumption of military operations in Gaza, and expressed alarm at the numerous accounts of gender-based atrocities and sexual violence during those attacks, and called for a return to a path of peace for the sake of everyone in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, and especially for women and children;
5. Supports the United Nations call for a return to a path of peace, a respect for international humanitarian and international human rights law, and an end to the suffering of people in Gaza and in Israel, and those families still waiting for their loved ones to return.

BACKGROUND

United Nations - Israel-Gaza Crisis

On 7 October 2023, Palestinian armed groups in Gaza launched thousands of rockets toward Israel and breached through the perimeter fence of Gaza at multiple locations, entering into Israeli towns and killing and capturing Israeli forces and civilians. The Israeli military declared “a state of war alert,” and began striking targets in the Gaza Strip, including residential buildings and health care facilities. Since then, thousands of people have been killed and more than one million have been displaced, as parts of Gaza have been reduced to rubble.

The United Nations has played a significant role in addressing the enduring conflict between Israel and Palestine, and the UN has been actively involved in seeking a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Source: <https://www.un.org/en/situation-in-occupied-palestine-and-israel>

Australian Government

Australia does not recognise a Palestinian state. We are committed to a two-state solution in which Israel and a future Palestinian state coexist, in peace and security, within internationally recognised borders.

Source: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/occupied-palestinian-territories>

UN Women statement on the situation in Israel and Gaza

We deeply regret that military operations have resumed in Gaza, and we reiterate that all women, Israeli women, Palestinian women, as all others, are entitled to a life lived in safety and free from violence.

We unequivocally condemn the brutal attacks by Hamas on Israel on 7 October. We are alarmed by the numerous accounts of gender-based atrocities and sexual violence during those attacks.

This is why we have called for all accounts of gender-based violence to be duly investigated and prosecuted, with the rights of the victim at the core.

In all conflicts, UN women fully supports rigorous investigations and Commissions of Inquiry where they exist. We are actively supporting the [UN Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel](#), which began its investigation into sexual violence very shortly after the attacks occurred. We welcome [that the Commission has opened its call for submissions](#) on gender-based crimes since 7 October.

We also welcome that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Pramila Patten has activated the UN Action network, of which we are a member, to proactively share UN-sourced and verified information on incidents, patterns, and trends of conflict-related sexual violence to aid all investigations.

We continue to call for accountability for all acts of gender-based violence committed on and after 7 October, the immediate and unconditional release of all remaining hostages, and a humanitarian ceasefire.

For the sake of everyone in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, and especially women and children, we call for a return to a path of peace, a respect for international humanitarian and international human rights law, and an end to the suffering of people in Gaza and in Israel, and those families still waiting for their loved ones to return.

Source: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/statement/2023/12/un-women-statement-on-the-situation-in-israel-and-gaza>