

Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the councillors for the opportunity to speak.

In July, this council passed a motion pledging to express deep sympathy and offer solidarity to those affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine, including those impacted within the B&NES community. I am here today to ask how this pledge has been translated into action, particularly in line with councillors' responsibilities to their constituents.

The council's constitution clearly outlines your role: to respond to queries, investigate concerns, communicate council decisions, and represent the views of the community. For residents in B&NES who feel the impact of this conflict—whether personally, through family or friends, or due to heightened fears of division and discrimination—this pledge of solidarity is not just words on paper; it is a **commitment**.

What steps have you taken to ensure that those affected know they are supported? Have the same councillors who facilitated sanctuary for & assisted the 350 Ukrainian families in their hour of need, proactively engaged with our local communities to understand their concerns, or reached out to relevant groups and organisations to foster dialogue and provide reassurance? I ask because from conversations that I personally have had with Palestinian members of our community, **no one has reached out to them, despite being fully aware of their personal stories, some made right here in this very room.**

I raised this matter to council in May & also asked why the same hospitality that was shown to the Ukrainian refugees has not been extended to the desperate people of Gaza. I did not receive an adequate response. Why is their suffering viewed as non-urgent given that the death toll in Gaza is comprised of at least 22,000 children, mainly in the 5-9 age group. This is not only a humanitarian disaster - it's a genocide that has been 76 years in the making in abetted by Britain & the United States. Right now, there are traumatised Palestinian and Lebanese people working and studying in Bath who need to be supported, to be heard. They have families - or to be precise, whoever may be still alive in their immediate families, still living under the threat of being burned alive in their tents or blown to pieces by Israeli rockets.

To conclude, I urge the council to reflect on the promises made in July & to uphold those pledges. Bath Council has the opportunity to show compassion & be an example to other councils. Again, the offer for the council to contact

myself or any of the speakers from Bath Campaigns for further information or how we can assist in the process, remains. True solidarity requires consistent effort, and our community deserves to see this council living up to the values it has declared. Thank you.