

I stand here today as a Bath resident and a U.K citizen to express concern that the 18th July commitments made through a peace motion passed by this Council are **A** weak and watered down attempt to address the genocide in Gaza and the impact it has on Palestinian and Muslim residents of Bath.

So, while I acknowledge this Council - and thank the Greens for bringing this motion - to allow BANES to join the growing number of Councils around the country demanding a ceasefire – this motion is not forceful enough.

One of fundamental flaws - and why I call it a watered-down motion - is the amendment made to the title – from a ceasefire motion to a Motion on Peace. I would like to ask the Council why the title of the motion was changed?

I ask this is because language matters.

Calling it a peace motion under the current circumstances of a live streamed genocide reveals an attempt to be passive, neutral, A-political, moderate and dare I say, safe.

An estimated 180,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israel¹, 70% being women and children.² According to the UN famine has set in³ over 70,000 tons of bombs⁴ (worse than Dresden, London and Hamburg put together in WW1⁵) have been dropped on a strip of land no bigger than 360 km. 80% of schools⁶ and 32 out of 36 hospitals destroyed.⁷

In this context, advocating and calling for peace is not the same thing as you saying you oppose violence, you oppose the killing of civilians, you oppose destruction, you oppose sending arms to Israel and you oppose injustice.

Under these circumstances a motion titled peace motion is the beginning of a cop out as it does not even mention Palestinians, Gaza or permanent ceasefire in its title. It is similar to when the slogan - Black Lives Matter distorted to All Lives Matter – it becomes vague and hollow.

And if my words don't convince you to question how as a Council you remain relevant to the residents of this city and remain on the right side of history when it judges you in the future I quote the words of the Martin Luther King, where in a letter from a Birmingham jail in 1967 he said: the moderate has been gravely disappointing. The moderate is more devoted to "order" than to justice; the moderate prefers a negative peace - which is the absence of tension - **to a positive peace** which is the presence of justice.

I end with questions to this Council: I seek an explanation as to why a ceasefire motion has been reworded to a peace motion? Why also has there been a lack calling for a permanent ceasefire? Why is there no commitment to demand Central Government end arms sales to Israel? Or has this motion been passed as mere tokenism and another box to tick?

¹ <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2824%2901169-3>

² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn5wel11pgdo>

³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/9/strong-likelihood-of-imminent-famine-in-north-gaza-food-security-experts>

⁴ Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor

⁵ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/amount-of-israeli-bombs-dropped-on-gaza-surpasses-that-of-world-war-ii/3239665>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/jun/08/israel-destroying-schools-scholasticide>

⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/21/gaza-hospitals-attacks-bombed-israel-war/>