

**Statement to council      November 21<sup>st</sup> 2024.      Jane Samson**

**Actioning commitments made to local Palestinians in the July 18<sup>th</sup> Peace Motion**

Good evening.

On a side note – last week a UN Special Committee stated that Israel’s warfare methods in Gaza are consistent with genocide, including the use of starvation as a weapon. Today the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for President Netenyhu and Gallant, the former Israeli Minister of Defence. I wonder if councillors here recognise that a genocide is being perpetrated? Or do you not see the UN as a valid frame of reference anymore?

Moving on - today we are calling for a meeting with Kevin Guy to discuss the commitments made in the Peace Motion passed on 18th July. Though absent at that vote, as leader of the council with executive power, it is Mr Guy we wish to speak to.

Where are the Palestinians? Where is the Islamic Community? It is sad indeed that Ameerah, Majdi, Lara and Mohammed, hardworking residents of Bath who pay taxes and support our economy, who have spoken repeatedly in council, with courage, eloquence, grace, integrity and patience about an issue which is tearing them apart have given up on you.

Why?

Because you have lost their trust.

Because your words and promises are empty and your double standards are eye watering.

Because they have been disrespected by you.

Neither does the wider Islamic community see the point in turning up to give support.

You voted for a motion that was dressed in words of compassion and solidarity and that promised local action - but none of this has materialized.

What events have you ‘supported and facilitated’ that enable people to come together to ‘express sadness and solidarity’ in response to what is happening in Gaza?

What have you done to 'assist and nurture' our residents during these challenging times?

What have you done to 'combat racism and discrimination' in our communities?

Perhaps you are not aware of any issues? In that case what have you done to find out?

Several weeks after the motion was passed, a group of us met with the Equality and Diversity Officer.

We were shocked that she had been told nothing about the motion or the commitments made to local communities.

She has worked a lot with Ukrainian refugees – but the news that there are Palestinians and other residents impacted by the genocide and in need of support had not been conveyed to her.

You have made no attempt to put Palestinians on your radar. Talk of addressing racism and discrimination has been swept under the carpet.

On July 18<sup>th</sup> the Peace motion was passed unanimously. A massive turnaround from previous occasions when it had been brought but rejected out of hand.

The council acted as one – as if a prior agreement had been made between group leaders. A council strategy.

Therefore, I am asking you as individuals, with consciences and minds of your own, do you think the council should meet the commitments that it made in July?

Please raise your hand if your answer is 'yes'.

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Thank you