

I urge the Board to ensure that the upcoming consultation on arms divestment is conducted in good faith and reflects the principles of transparency and democracy. All members of the Avon Pension Fund, whose deferred wages are being invested, deserve a meaningful say in this decision.

The consultation must be open to *all* members, not just a sample, and must provide the necessary information and context to allow members to make an informed and independent decision. This includes the ethical, social, financial and environmental implications of continued investment in arms companies, including those arming governments accused of human rights abuses.

To do otherwise risks undermining trust in the consultation and the Fund's commitment to ethical investment. A fair and transparent process is the bare minimum that APF members deserve.

UWE UNISON, represent members in one of the largest contributing cohorts to the fund. We urge the Board to uphold your decision made in March to consult your members regarding divestment from the Aerospace and Defence sectors. Members have a right to say how they wish their deferred wages are invested, and we should be allowed to do this without further delay.

UWE UNISON trade union has voted to support divestment from Aerospace and Defence. As a trade union, our membership are deeply concerned with Human Rights, Workers Rights, and respect for International Law both at home and abroad. The Israeli occupation of Palestine is directly responsible for multiple Human Rights violations in Gaza and the West Bank.

Freedom of Movement is protected by International Law.

The right to work and just and favourable conditions is protected by International Law.

The right to Health is protected by International Law.

The right to Education is protected by International Law.

The right to Water and Sanitation is protected by International Law.

Palestinians are denied safe and fair access to **all these rights**. By investing our wages in companies like BAE systems that help Israel maintain its illegal occupation of Palestinian territories – you are making us complicit in human rights violations without our consent. We have a responsibility as individuals and groups to 'promote

and protect universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms', this has been recognised in International Law since 1999.

The purpose of our jobs at UWE is to help students achieve an education that will further their opportunities in life. It is in direct contrast to our jobs that our hard-earned wages are invested in companies that have contributed to the destruction of all the Universities in Gaza. Our wages are being used to take away the opportunities and futures of all people in Gaza. Palestinians are as entitled to being able to live in peace and freedom as any of us.

Pensions are supposed to provide for our futures – it is contradictory for Avon Pension Fund, to say you have a 'credible plan' to reach net zero by 2045, when funds are being invested in a sector that is responsible for 50% of central UK's government emissions. Climate change is worsening conflicts and harms biodiversity with war and conflict making it harder for ecosystems to recover. The British Army emits around 11 million tons of CO2 annually, equivalent to over 60 other countries combined, with 30% of those emissions being attributed to BAE Systems.

UWE staff are one of the largest contributors to APF. As the recognised trade union body representing staff that feed significantly into the fund, UWE UNISON is calling APF to:

- Conduct a full democratic consultation of all members of the fund
- To include an alternative in the form of the Paris Climate Fund

UWE UNISON members are asking APF to choose Welfare not Warfare.