

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KNOXVILLE RESPECTFULLY CALLING ON THE U.S. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO URGE AN IMMEDIATE DE-ESCALATION AND CEASEFIRE IN ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED PALESTINE AND TO EXPRESS THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KNOXVILLE’S SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE FACING GENOCIDAL LEVELS OF VIOLENCE AT THE HANDS OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

RESOLUTION NO: _____

REQUESTED BY: Councilmember Parker
PREPARED BY: Council

APPROVED: _____

APPROVED AS AN EMERGENCY MEASURE: _____

MINUTE BOOK: _____ **PAGE** _____

WHEREAS, 1,200 Israelis were killed by Hamas on October 7th and over 11,000 Palestinians, including over 4,000 children, have been killed by the state of Israel in this escalated conflict; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Knoxville mourns the loss of all civilian lives lost from October 7th to the present and also throughout the decades of displacement, occupation, oppression, and blockade endured in Gaza and the West Bank; and

WHEREAS, the Council stands in solidarity with the Palestinian people of Gaza, the West Bank, and those in the diaspora who are currently facing collective punishment by the state of Israel, resulting in levels of death and violence unseen in the area in the last 75 years; and

WHEREAS, collective punishment is considered a war crime under international law, and refers to a form of sanction imposed on persons or a group of persons in response to a crime committed by one of them or a member of the group; and

WHEREAS, the state of Israel is engaging in collective punishment against the Palestinian people in Gaza in response to Hamas attacks on Israel; and

WHEREAS, this collective punishment of the Palestinian people includes a mass bombing campaign and military operation as well as the shutting off of all access to electricity, drinking water, food, and humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza by the state of Israel; and

WHEREAS, the collective punishment and bombardment of hospitals, schools, and refugee camps of Palestinians by the state of Israel, aided by billions in U.S. taxpayer dollars, is a violation of international law, per Common Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention,

which also bans the severe restriction of aid as a punishment in response to the actions committed by a select member(s) of the group; and

WHEREAS, the Gaza strip has been blockaded over the course of 20-plus years, is referred to by a variety of scholars and human rights groups as “the world’s largest open air prison,” and is one the most densely populated places on Earth; and

WHEREAS, Israel's blockade on Gaza has resulted in a 42% unemployment rate, with 84% of the population relying on humanitarian aid, and 60% of Palestinian children suffering from anemia; and

WHEREAS, the UN Relief and Works Agency has reported that 1.6 million Gazans have been displaced, and has corroborated the count of over 11,000 Palestinians killed since October 7th including at least 4,700 Palestinian children; and

WHEREAS, Israel has historically exercised full control of Gaza’s access to drinking water, food, electricity, and humanitarian aid, which has been further restricted since the events on October 7th; and

WHEREAS, the UN says approximately 2 million people in Gaza may soon run out of drinking water and all medical care; and

WHEREAS, Tennesseans and the broader population of Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims, Jewish people, and allies across the U.S. who have and are taking part in protests and demonstrations against Israel’s disproportionate counter-assault on Hamas in Gaza and the West Bank have faced harassment, doxxing, and threats of violence, including anti-Arab sentiment, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Knoxville condemns the claims that advocacy, protest, and demonstration for Palestine is synonymous with anti-semitic beliefs, and that this serves to exacerbate anti-Arab and Islamophobic sentiments and actions; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Knoxville recognizes the conflation of the state of Israel with all Jewish peoples is harmful, and further serves to exacerbate anti-Semitic sentiments and actions; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. government has financially enabled the state of Israel to continue its onslaught and attacks on Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of lives are at risk of further starvation, injury, displacement, and death if a cease-fire and end to the blockade is not achieved, and humanitarian aid and support provided immediately.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KNOXVILLE:

SECTION 1: The Council of the City of Knoxville takes seriously that the entreaty “Never Again” in memory of the Holocaust means preventing apartheid and ethnic cleansing everywhere, regardless of religion, ethnicity, race, or creed; and

SECTION 2: The Council of the City of Knoxville calls for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the safe passage of substantial humanitarian aid to Gaza; and

SECTION 3: The Council of the City of Knoxville calls for the immediate release of all Israeli hostages taken by Hamas; and

SECTION 4: The Council of the City of Knoxville calls for an end to Israel’s apartheid, occupation, and military blockade of Palestinian land and peoples; and

SECTION 5: The Council of the City of Knoxville renounces the targeting and surveillance of Arabs, Palestinians, and fellow allies in the city of Knoxville; and

SECTION 6: The Council of the City of Knoxville calls on everyone to respect the rights of freedom of speech and peaceful protest, and to not retaliate against anyone for expressing solidarity with the human rights of Palestinians or Israelis;

SECTION 7: The Council of the City of Knoxville calls upon President Biden to use his extensive political and financial leverage to demand an immediate ceasefire, the immediate deployment of humanitarian aid to Gaza, and the immediate release of all hostages and prisoners of war; and

SECTION 8: The Council of the City of Knoxville endorses the Congressional Resolution submitted by Representatives Cori Bush (MO-01), Rashida Tlaib (MI-12), André Carson (IN-07), Summer Lee (PA-12), and Delia C. Ramirez (IL-03), alongside Representatives Jamaal Bowman (NY-16), Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ-12), Jesús “Chuy” García (IL-04), Jonathan Jackson (IL-01), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14), Ilhan Omar (MN-05), Ayanna Pressley (MA-07), and Nydia Velázquez (NY-07) and urges Knoxville’s U.S. Congressional delegation to vote in support of the resolution.

SECTION 9: Upon adoption, the City Recorder is hereby respectfully requested and directed to forward a true and correct copy of this Resolution to the City’s U.S. Congressional delegation to apprise them of City Council’s respectful request.

Presiding Officer of the Council

City Recorder