

Petition to EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL:

Divest from Israel and stop support for genocide

We, the undersigned, petition the council to divest the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), and end procurement contracts, with companies enabling Israel's grave violations of Palestinian rights.

Israel's genocidal assault on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians - almost half of them children. 90% of Gaza's population has been displaced, many of whom multiple times. Nowhere in Gaza is safe: entire residential neighbourhoods have been levelled, UN schools sheltering the displaced, and hospitals treating the wounded, have been repeatedly targeted. Palestinians in Gaza are facing famine due to Israel's blockade and its targeting of life-sustaining infrastructure.

In June 2024, UN experts declared that "Israel's intentional and targeted starvation campaign against the Palestinian people is a form of genocidal violence and has resulted in famine across all of Gaza."

In January, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the world court, handed down an interim ruling affirming there is plausible evidence Israel is committing genocidal acts against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. As a State Party to the Genocide Convention, the UK has a binding obligation to employ all means reasonably available to prevent and deter further genocidal acts.

In June, UN experts issued a statement demanding that both states and companies stop all arms transfers to Israel. In issuing their call, they outlined that financial institutions, such as banks and pension funds, investing in arms companies supplying Israel must cease, writing that financial institutions "failure to prevent or mitigate their business relationships with these arms manufacturers transferring arms to Israel could move from being directly linked to human rights abuses to contributing to them, with repercussions for complicity in potential atrocity crimes."

In July the ICJ confirmed that Israel's occupation of Palestinian land and treatment of Palestinians is unlawful and that it is under an obligation to bring to an end its unlawful presence "as rapidly as possible." It also stated that Israel is "under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities and to evacuate all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory."

We, the undersigned, call on the Council to:

Divest the Local Government Pension Scheme fund administered by the council from companies complicit in Israel's genocide and apartheid against Palestinians. This includes arms companies supplying Israel with weapons and military technology; companies providing infrastructure for Israel's unlawful military occupation of Palestinian land; and companies conducting business activity in Israel's illegal settlements on stolen Palestinian land.

End procurement contracts with companies complicit in Israel's attacks. For example, terminate all banking arrangements with Barclays, which provides substantial financing to companies supplying Israel with weapons used in its attacks on Palestinians.

The recent defeat of the previous government's draconian attempts to restrict the right of public bodies to take ethical investment and procurement decisions means that there is no barrier to the council exercising its profound moral obligation not to contribute to Israel's grave violations of Palestinian rights.

Please sign overleaf (provide names and postcodes not signatures) and return to Hastings & District Palestine Solidarity Campaign before January 24th 2025 for submission to ESCC full council meeting on Tuesday 11th February 2025

Contact info@hastingspalestinecampaign.org to arrange collection

