

Date: November 13, 2023

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager



From: Teresa Chandler, Deputy City Manager



For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Equity and Human Relations Commission Recommendations Concerning the Israel-Palestine War**

On November 1, 2023, the Equity and Human Relations Commission (EHRC) discussed the impact of the Israel-Palestine War on human relations with the community members of the City of Long Beach, and approved recommendations for the Mayor and City Council's consideration.

The EHRC kindly requests staff to transmit the written recommendation with the following message to the City Manager:

- I. A request to the City Manager that EHRC's recommendation to the City Council is transmitted to the City Council for its consideration within thirty (30) days or sooner after the recommendation is adopted and/or finalized; and,
- II. A request that the original recommendation from EHRC is transmitted to the City Manager unaltered and if staff and/or the City Manager has a recommendation that is different from that of the Commission, the staff and/or City Manager recommendation is presented to the City Council separately for its consideration.

Please find the EHRC's recommendations to the Mayor and City Council enclosed.

If you would like any further information regarding this communication, please contact Alanah Grant, Equity Officer, at (562) 570-6656 or via email at Alanah.Grant@longbeach.gov.

ATTACHMENT

CC: DAWN MCINTOSH, CITY ATTORNEY
DOUGLAS P. HAUBERT, CITY PROSECUTOR
LAURA L. DOUD, CITY AUDITOR
LINDA F. TATUM, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
TERESA CHANDLER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
MEREDITH REYNOLDS, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
APRIL WALKER, ADMINISTRATIVE DEPUTY TO THE CITY MANAGER
TYLER CURLEY, ACTING DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
KEVIN LEE, CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK
DEPARTMENT HEADS

EQUITY AND HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

D. Eduardo Lara, Chair
Christopher Covington, Vice Chair
Robbie Butler, Commissioner
Cory Allen, Commissioner
D. Sharifa Batts, Commissioner
Trace Camacho, Commissioner
Alyssa Gutierrez, Commissioner



M. Lissette Flores, Commissioner
Jessica Gillette, Commissioner
Cheryl Koll, Commissioner
Jon Schultz, Commissioner
Keyona Montgomery,
Commissioner

November 8, 2023

Honorable Mayor Richardson and Members of the City Council
City of Long Beach
411 W. Ocean Blvd, 11th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

RE: Recommendations Regarding the Israel-Palestine War.

Honorable Mayor Richardson, Members of Long Beach City Council,

On behalf of the Equity and Human Relations Commission (EHRC), I write with a heavy heart. As you may be aware, on October 7, Hamas killed over 1,400 Israelis and continues to hold 240 hostages. In response, the State of Israel declared war on Hamas and embarked on an aerial bombing campaign on Gaza. At least 10,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have been killed since the start of the war. We recognize the violent events from October 7 did not occur in a vacuum, but rather speaks to decades of violence and conflict in the region. In remaining consistent with our humanitarian-centered values as a commission, the EHRC submits this letter and recommendations regarding our local response to the Israel-Palestine War with a sincere hope that our City continues to embrace values of justice, equity, respect, and dignity for all its residents.

Glocality: How the Global Impacts the City

On the surface, it may seem that municipalities weighing in on matters of foreign policy fall outside the scope of purview. To the contrary, the concept of glocality speaks to the relationship and interconnection between global and local issues. In other words, global matters do shape the lives of local residents and vice-versa; the EHRC makes these recommendations from this standpoint.

Indeed, the EHRC recognizes that matters at the global level do have a local impact. As community members have shared, local implications of the Israel-Palestine War are no different and as a matter of humanitarianism, they affect us all, as seen by the recent and unfortunate rise of both anti-semitism and islamophobia in Long Beach and throughout the United States.

Community Voices

At the EHRC meeting on November 1, 2023, we heard public testimony from a range of community members, business owners, nonprofit leaders, professors, and descendants of refugees from the 1948 “Nakba,” which violently displaced 750,000 Palestinians to pave the way for the creation of the State of Israel. Community members shared a strong desire to see our local, state and federal representatives to support a cease-fire in Israel and Palestine, allowing for food, clean water, and medical personnel and equipment into Gaza.

One community leader described the terror of seeing the “countless graphic images, video, and accounts of dead, burnt, bloody, deformed, decaying bodies of [Palestinian] children, women, and men” and acknowledged that “despite the fact that 66% of Americans, according to an MSNBC poll, support a Cease-fire, it is the first time that the world has gotten a front row seat to a livestream genocide.” Another community leader and business owner called on us to realize that Gaza, which is approximately the size of Long Beach, with five times the population, has had 25,000 tons of bombs dropped on them by Israel in the last four weeks, the equivalent of two nuclear bombs.

Yet another community leader from a local non-profit shared the parallels to the Khmer Rouge genocide of the Cambodian community, which resulted in Long Beach becoming the largest home to Cambodian residents outside of Cambodia. While one community leader described the perpetual anxiety of not knowing if her cousins, aunts and uncles will survive another day in Gaza, and has received messages from her family in Gaza asking, “Do they see us? Do they know what’s going on? Why isn’t humanity stepping in to stop the genocide?”

Recommendations

In response to local voices calling for ceasefire, the commission unanimously recommends that City Council adopt a resolution aligned to the following:

1. Adopt a local resolution supporting a ceasefire and demand to end violence in Israel and Occupied Palestine, immediately urge the Long Beach congressional delegation to sign onto the Ceasefire Now Resolution (HR786) and allow humanitarian aid and medical supplies in Gaza.
2. Identify and support local programs and services that de-escalate Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism; foster community relations, dialogues centering Palestinian and Jewish voices, and mental health for residents affected by the conflict.
3. Condemn all forms of hate, violence, apartheid, xenophobia, colonialism, genocide and mass ethnic cleansing.

It is important to note that Recommendations 2 and 3 are also aligned with Goal 2, Strategy 2 from the Racial Reconciliation and Reconciliation Initiative: Initial Report, "strengthen community-based violence prevention and intervention systems."

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Stand Against Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

It should be underscored that the support for the humanity and safety of Palestinians is not to be confused with support for terrorism. This rhetoric would only serve to inflame the ongoing Islamophobia happening in our community. Additionally, the support of Palestinians should never be used to support or justify anti-semitism. Understanding the impact of the global conflict in our local community is pivotal for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of Palestinian-American, Arab Muslim-American, and Jewish American residents of our City.

From the day the EHRC passed this recommendation, roughly 2000 additional lives, mostly women and children, could have been saved had a ceasefire gone into effect. We urge you to be amongst the sea of voices demanding for a ceasefire. We urge you to take a stand against indifference in the face of bigotry and violence, and a stand for humanity.

Respectfully,

Dr. Eduardo Lara, Chair
Equity and Human Relations Commission

118TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION H. RES.

Calling for an immediate deescalation and cease-fire in Israel and occupied Palestine.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. BUSH submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on

RESOLUTION

Calling for an immediate deescalation and cease-fire in Israel and occupied Palestine. Whereas all human life is precious, and the targeting of civilians, no matter their faith or ethnicity, is a violation of international humanitarian law;

Whereas, between October 7 and October 16, 2023, armed violence has claimed the lives of over 2,700 Palestinians and over 1,400 Israelis, including Americans, and wounded thousands more;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of lives are at imminent risk if a cease-fire is not achieved and humanitarian aid is not delivered without delay; and

Whereas the Federal Government holds immense diplomatic power to save Israeli and Palestinian lives: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

- (1) urges the Biden administration to immediately call for and facilitate deescalation and a cease-fire to urgently end the current violence; and
- (2) calls upon the Biden administration to promptly send and facilitate the entry of humanitarian assistance into Gaza.

References

1. Krystal Nurse, Eduardo Cuevas and Vanessa Arredondo, "Jewish and Muslim organizations denounce attacks against college students: 'Feel increasingly vulnerable and targeted,'" *USA Today*, November 4, 2023, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2023/11/04/anti-jewish-muslim-attacks-rising-across-the-u-s-colleges/71457844007/>, (accessed November 7, 2023).
2. Mathew Duss, "An Israel-Hamas ceasefire is in everyone's best interest, humanely and practically," *The Guardian*, November 1, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/nov/01/israel-hamas-ceasefire-humanitarian-pause>, (accessed November 3, 2023).
3. Najib Jobain, Jack Jeffery and Lee Keath, "Israeli forces cut off north Gaza to isolate Hamas as an advance on the urban center looms," *Associated Press*, November 6, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-news-11-6-2023-51286d15dddd77ae0dd7ea76ee52bc71>, (accessed November 6, 2023).