

**Sheffield Hallam University UCU Branch motion passed on 18/10/2023 supporting the Palestinian struggle and calling for a ceasefire and de-escalation in Gaza.**

This Branch is horrified by and is opposed to all attacks on civilians in Israel and Palestine, which are a crime against humanity and forbidden under international law. As the statement by National UCU says:

As a trade union, we are committed to achieving peace and an end to violence and oppression. We send our solidarity to all those affected by these events, especially education staff and students. We know that many will be worrying about loved ones, and to those grieving we send our heartfelt condolences.

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/13229/UCU-statement-on-IsraelGaza#:~:text=As%20a%20trade%20union%2C%20we,we%20send%20our%20heartfelt%20condolences>

At the same time, this Branch also opposes the present attempts by UK government, Labour opposition and media establishment to use the attacks by Hamas as a pretext to

- a) escalate support for Israel's genocidal war against the Palestinian people, specifically in its overt existential threat to the whole population of Gaza which is now suffering brutal collective punishment through massive and indiscriminate bombing and the cutting off of all resources essential to the maintenance of life;
- b) undermine Palestinians' right under international law to resist, by appropriate force, the illegal Israeli occupation and siege as well as to ignore the legal responsibility of the occupying power to secure and protect the occupied civilian population;
- c) criminalise expression of support for Palestinian rights, freedom and national statehood (including showing the Palestinian national flag) and to further threaten academic freedom, university autonomy and freedom of speech with respect to Israel/Palestine as proposed in the 'anti-boycott bill' ('The Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill') which is due for its 3<sup>rd</sup> reading.

We believe that the root causes and foundations of violence and conflict in Israel/Palestine are the many decades of brutal and inhumane treatment of the Palestinian people under the illegal Israeli occupation, siege and system of Apartheid and that, in line with fundamental principles and positions of international law, these must be ended for a just, lasting and peaceful resolution to be made possible. In the immediate, we support the position of National UCU:

We call upon the British government and the international community to collectively call for an immediate ceasefire and de-escalation. This must include an end to the blockade of Gaza by the Israeli military and a halt to further violence against civilians by Hamas, before any more lives are lost.