

Motion B

Palestine and trade unions motion (for ICL UCU members meeting 14/06/24)

This branch notes:

1. The October 7th atrocities committed by Hamas against Israel were acts of terror and the taking of hostages, many of whom, including babies, young women and elderly, remain in captivity, is a war crime. The October 7th attack constituted an act of war.
2. The Israel-Hamas war continues whilst Hamas refuses to unconditionally and immediately release the hostages – a condition of the immediate ceasefire called for by among others the UN Security council and the UK government
3. The US and British governments support Israel’s right to defend its borders. Israel is facing constant attacks from Hezbollah in the North, the Houthis in Yemen, as well as continued attacks from Hamas and other terrorist groups in Gaza. Iran launched a deadly attack directly at Israel in April and continues to fund and support the proxy wars against Israel.
4. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has said the UK needs to get “on a war footing” and is increasing defence spending, while opposition leader Keir Starmer has stated that “our nation’s defence must always come first”.
5. That the war against Hamas has undoubtedly caused large numbers of civilian deaths, hugely aggravated by Hamas’ failure to protect the civilian population and instead to use them as human shields and to embed themselves within the civilian population.
6. There has been widespread destruction of academic institutions (and more) in Gaza, often due to Hamas using these as bases for their activities, which the Israeli government, citing international law, argues made them legitimate targets in war.
7. There is no role for UCU in boycotting academic institutions and indeed it is counter productive to a peaceful future in the region

This branch believes:

1. Whilst defence spending should be increased to ensure the UK is prepared for attacks from aggressors, this should not be at the expense of education and healthcare.
2. The President's earlier comment "Freedom of Speech is not an unfettered right" is correct and aims to protect all staff from hate speech. Rhetoric that calls for the destruction of the State of Israel (as opposed to criticizing Israeli government policies) is unacceptable and threatening to Jewish and Israeli students and staff alike.
3. We support the right to peacefully protest and act for peace and justice but these protests must not include hate speech against another group, call for the destruction of the State of Israel or make the campus feel unsafe for minority groups.

This branch resolves to:

1. Advocate for open discussion on the war, in the interests of academic community, and of advancing a just peace for all Palestinian and Jewish peoples living in the region.
2. Support, encourage attendance and publicise all peace marches agreed by branch on a case-by-case basis.
3. Support developing links with redeveloped academic institutions in Gaza and build links with academic institutions in Israel which support Palestinian students and a peaceful future.

Motion FELL at a quorate all members' meeting on 14/6/24