

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: February 20, 2024

=====

To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Mayor Rich and Vice Mayor Zollman
Subject: Cease Fire Resolution

=====

RECOMMENDATION: The item is to request Council City Council Consider and Approve the Resolution for Cease Fire.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On Oct. 7, dozens of Hamas militants broke out of the blockaded Gaza Strip and into nearby Israeli towns, taking hostages and leaving thousands dead, the Associated Press reported. More than 10,500 Palestinians — two-thirds of them women and minors, have died a month after the surprise attacks, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-run territory. Israeli officials say thousands of Palestinian militants have been killed and blame civilian deaths on Hamas. More than 1,400 people have died in Israel since the start of the war, most of them civilians killed by Hamas militants, according to the Associated Press.

The unparalleled escalation of the conflict between Israel and Hamas and other armed groups has taken a devastating toll on civilians. The level of casualties is unprecedented. Countless lives have been shattered, ripped apart, and upended. Civilian deaths in Gaza continue to rise at a staggering rate amid relentless Israeli bombardment, in response to the horrific attacks in Israel by Hamas and other armed groups that resulted in 1,400 people killed and the abduction of civilians. More than 10,000 people, mostly civilians, have been killed in Gaza including through indiscriminate and other unlawful attacks. More than a third of casualties in Gaza are children and countless bodies are still trapped beneath the rubble. Millions more face further displacement, dispossession and suffering.

At least 200 Israeli hostages taken by Hamas and other armed groups and held in Gaza remain in danger, and ongoing indiscriminate rocket fire into Israel places civilians at risk. Israel’s tightened siege of Gaza has blocked the entry of goods, including water, food and fuel leaving more than 2 million people in the Gaza Strip struggling to survive. With each day that passes more lives are lost and the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza is getting worse.

Tonight’s item is requesting the City of Sebastopol join the United Nations, Amnesty International, World Health Organization, world leaders, religious leaders, and citizens of the world everywhere in calling for an immediate and permanent CEASEFIRE, an end to all armed hostilities, and the prompt release of all hostages on both sides.

BACKGROUND:

Sebastopol is known as a small City that often weighs in on conflicts that have the attention of the world; most recently the Ukraine Invasion. Tonight’s item addresses Israel’s engagement in collective punishment against the Palestinian people in Gaza in response to Hamas attacks on Israel; and that this includes shutting off all access to electricity, drinking water, food, and humanitarian aid. Per the United Nations, it says that approximately 2 million people in Gaza may soon run out of drinking water and all medical care and hundreds of thousands of lives are at imminent risk if a cease-fire is not achieved and humanitarian aid is not delivered without delay.

Sebastopol has a moral obligation to condemn these types of acts. Sebastopol is known as Peace Town and as such we should be a community of peace for everyone, not just our small community but for the communities of

this world. We as advocates should advocate for the dignity and safety of residents in every community, and that peaceful diplomacy is the only way to achieve this safety and dignity.

ANALYSIS:

As members of this Council, we urge this Council to request the Federal Government , who holds immense diplomatic power to save Israeli and Palestinian lives, to demand:

- An immediate cease-fire by all parties involved, including an immediate cessation of all attacks on civilian targets; and
- The return of all hostages to their homes; and
- Ongoing negotiations to cultivate lasting peace and create a system that represents the human rights of all people in the region.

Although Israel and Hamas appear to be inching closer towards a deal for a ceasefire and a release of some of the hostages still being held by the militant group in Gaza, the UN children’s agency has warned that 17,000 children have been left without families or been separated from them by the conflict. As proposed, the Resolution is not to cause division and acts of hate and violence in our community but to come together to around shared values such as the value of human life, need for humanitarian aid, release of hostages, a cease-fire and end to the killing of civilians. The Resolution would call for the condemning of the October 7, 2023, terrorist attack on Israel by Hamas, which killed over 1,400 Israelis and leaves over 200 held hostage and condemning the collective punishment that the state of Israel is imposing on the Palestinian people in response to Hamas’s attack by killing over 10,000 people, over 4,000 of them children, and displacing over a million Palestinian residents of Gaza. A ceasefire would put a stop to unlawful attacks by all parties, halt the mounting death toll in Gaza and enable aid agencies to get life-saving aid, water and medical supplies into the Strip to address the staggering levels of human suffering. It will also allow hospitals to receive life-saving medicines, fuel and equipment they desperately need and to repair damaged wards.

A ceasefire would also provide opportunities to negotiate the release of hostages detained in Gaza and for independent international investigations to take place into the war crimes committed by all parties in order to end long-standing impunity, which will continue to breed further atrocities.

On Friday, November 3, 2023, the United Nations passed a resolution by a vote of 120-14-45. The Resolution called for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza and a humanitarian truce, the release of all civilians, the protection of civilians and international institutions, and ensuring the safe passage of humanitarian aid into the Strip.

The United States voted no on the UN Resolution and has thus far rejected outright calls for a ceasefire, suggesting that it would amount to a victory for Hamas, yet has begun suggesting “humanitarian pauses” to allow more humanitarian aid into Gaza and to ensure safe passage of civilians looking to flee the areas of Gaza where intensive aerial bombing continues across the Strip.

As of February 4, 2024, the below snapshot provides a comprehensive overview of the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza , including casualties, particularly among women and children.

Significant damage has been inflicted upon critical infrastructure and essential services, affecting people's ability to maintain their dignity and basic living standards.

This snapshot below highlights reported figures on the impact of hostilities on people in Gaza, where a major humanitarian crisis has unfolded.

This information was obtained from the United Nations Website: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-120>



*Source: MoH Gaza

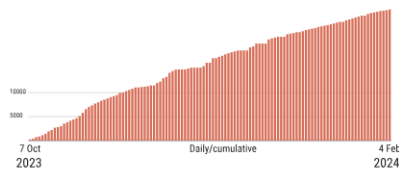
**Source: UNRWA

REPORTED CASUALTIES

(Cumulative) as of 4 February 2024

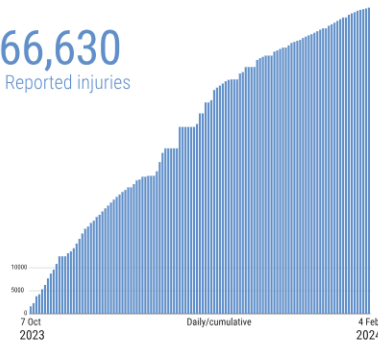
Palestinians*

 **27,365** Reported fatalities
in addition to ~1,000 fatalities in Israel, including people involved in the 7 October attack



*Source: MoH Gaza


 **66,630** Reported injuries



*Source: MoH Gaza

Israelis**

Israel
 **Over 1,200***** Reported fatalities

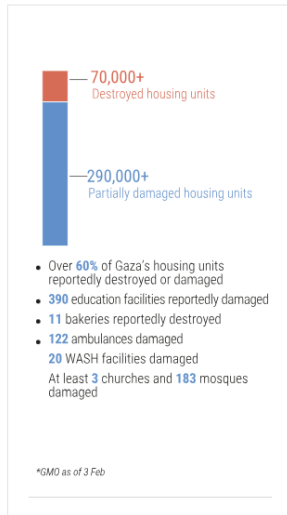
 **1,162** identified fatalities, including at least 33 children

 **~5,400** Reported injuries

Gaza****
 **223** Reported fatalities  **1,296** Reported injuries
136 hostages remain in Gaza

** According to Israeli media citing official sources
*** The reported estimate refers to fatalities on 7 October and the immediate aftermath and includes foreign nationals.
**** The reported Israeli casualties are soldiers killed or injured since the start of the ground operation.

Damage



Basic services and livelihoods

FOOD SECURITY

- 2.2 million** people at imminent risk of famine
- 378,000** people at Phase 5 (catastrophic levels) Phase 5 refers to extreme lack of food, starvation, and exhaustion of coping capacities.
- 939,000** people at Phase 4 (emergency levels)

*Source: IPC, 21 December

WATER AND SANITATION

- One** out of the three water pipelines coming from Israel is operational.
- No Access** to clean water in the northern governorates. Fuel shortage impacts: 60 water wells, 2 desalination plants, sewage stations and pumps, wastewater treatment.

HEALTH

- Hospitals are under heavy strikes.
- 13** of Gaza's **36** hospitals are partially functional: 6 in the south and 7 in the north.

At high risk
At least **1,000** kidney failure, **>2,000** cancer patients, **130** neonates in incubators.

Critical shortages of drugs, blood products and supplies (Fuel at the hospitals is being severely rationed).

EDUCATION

625K (100%) Students with no access to education.
90% of all school buildings have sustained significant damage.

HUMANITARIAN OPERATION

- 154** UN staff killed: UNRWA: **152**; WHO: **1**; UNDP: **1**
- At least **339** health workers killed
- 46** Civil Defence killed while on duty
- 122** Journalists killed

MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

- Civilian access to areas to the north of Wadi Gaza is only possible for humanitarian teams. In January 2024, 61 missions were planned to deliver humanitarian aid for the north of Wadi Gaza. 10 (16%) were facilitated by the Israeli military; 2 (3%) were partially facilitated; 9 (15%) were initially facilitated but subsequently impeded; 34 (56%) were denied access; and six (10%) were postponed by aid organizations due to internal operational constraints.
- The Rafah crossing with Egypt and the Kerem Shalom crossing with Israel are open for the entry of approved goods.
- The Rafah crossing is also open for the movement of some wounded and sick people from Gaza to Egypt, and aid workers into and out of Gaza.
- Access to the sea and to areas near Israel's perimeter fence is prohibited.

INCOMING TRUCKLOADS

The pre-crisis average per working day in 2023 was **500 truckloads, including fuel.**

Date	Daily average (by week)	Daily total
7-12 Oct 2023	0	0
13-19 Oct 2023	11	11
20-26 Oct 2023	43	43
27 Oct - 2 Nov 2023	59	59
3-9 Nov 2023	55	55
10-16 Nov 2023	55	55
17-23 Nov 2023	173 (Pause in hostilities)	173
24-30 Nov 2023	79	79
1-7 Dec 2023	109	109
8-14 Dec 2023	128	128
15-21 Dec 2023	97	97
22-28 Dec 2023	137	137
29 Dec - 4 Jan 2024	145	145
5-11 Jan 2024	156	156
12-18 Jan 2024	156	156
19-25 Jan 2024	68	68
26 Jan - 1 Feb 2024	NA	NA
27 Jan - 28 Jan 2024	84	84
29 Jan - 30 Jan 2024	170	170
31 Jan - 1 Feb 2024	134	134
2 Feb - 3 Feb 2024	161	161
4 Feb - 1 Feb 2024	200	200
2 Feb - 3 Feb 2024	NA	NA
3 Feb - 4 Feb 2024	NA	NA
4 Feb - 1 Feb 2024	NA	NA
Weekly totals	0	0
	16	16
	500	500
	411	411
	388	388
	395	395
	1209	1209
	558	558
	764	764
	894	894
	681	681
	857	857
	1017	1017
	1694	1694
	1065	1065

Disclaimer: The UN has so far not been able to produce independent, comprehensive, and verified casualty figures; the current numbers have been provided by the Ministry of Health or the Government Media Office in Gaza and the Israeli authorities and await further verification. Other yet-to-be verified figures are also sourced.

As of the writing of this report, the City of Cotati is the only Sonoma County city that has adopted a Cease Fire Resolution.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

This item has been noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact with approval of the resolution tonight.

OPTIONS:

If the City Council does not approve the Resolution as submitted, the Council has the option of:

- Approving the Resolution with Amendments; this would require removal from the consent calendar for Council discussion.
- Not approve the Resolution. If the Resolution were not approved, there would be no further action on the City of Sebastopol.

ATTACHMENTS:

DRAFT Proposed Resolution

APPROVALS:

CEQA Determination (Planning):

Approval Date: 2-14-2024

The proposed action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

RESOLUTION NO XXXX-2024

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CALLING FOR A CEASE FIRE

WHEREAS, the City of Sebastopol opposes all forms of hatred including antisemitic/anti-Jewish, anti-Arab racism, Islamophobia, bigotry, apartheid, and genocide, and advocates for the rights, dignity and safety of residents in every community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Sebastopol recognizes and mourns the lives lost on and since October 7, 2023 due to the violence in Israel and Gaza which has claimed, as of January 4, 2024, the lives of at least 1,200 Israelis and more than 25,000 Palestinians, with thousands more wounded and imprisoned; and according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, an estimated 1,900,000 Palestinians (85% of Gaza) have been internally displaced; and

WHEREAS, since October 7th, Middle Eastern and Jewish community members in Sonoma County, and across the country have been subjected to an increase in racist acts including violent physical attacks, hate speech and vandalism; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of lives are at imminent risk of death, famine and life-threatening diseases in Gaza without a sustained ceasefire and unimpeded large scale humanitarian relief; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Sebastopol joins the United Nations, Amnesty International, World Health Organization, world leaders, religious leaders, and citizens of the world everywhere in calling for an immediate and permanent CEASEFIRE, an end to all armed hostilities, and the prompt release of all hostages on both sides; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Sebastopol supports U.S. Congress Resolution HR 786 and joins other cities in calling on our Congressional Members to demand: an immediate and permanent ceasefire; release of all hostages; the unrestricted entry of humanitarian assistance into Gaza; the restoration of food, water, electricity, and medical supplies to Gaza; and respect for international law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a permanent solution to this crisis must be one of the top foreign policy priorities of the United States to reduce human suffering and promote peace in the region; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that this resolution be posted publicly and that a copy of it is sent to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, the Mayors and Councilmembers of each of its incorporated cities and town, the offices of Assemblymember Jim Wood, State Senator Mike McGuire, Representative Mike Thompson, Representative Jared Huffman, Senator Laphonza Butler, Senator Alex Padilla, Governor Gavin Newsom, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, Vice President Kamala Harris, and President Joe Biden, urging them to take immediate action to use their position and influence to end this conflict and work towards a permanent peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the CITY COUNCIL of THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL COUNTY OF SONOMA of STATE OF CALIFORNIA on this 20th day of February, 2024.

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by the City of Sebastopol City Council by the following vote:

Ayes:
Noes:
Absent:
Abstain:

APPROVED: _____
Mayor Diana Gardner Rich

ATTEST: _____
Mary Gourley, MMC, Assistant City Manager / City Clerk

Approved as to Form: _____
Larry McLaughlin, City Attorney