

From: Isabel Piedmont-Smith, City Council District 1
Dave Rollo, City Council District 4

To: City Council colleagues

Re: Resolution 2024-08, Calling for a cessation of hostilities and delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza

Date: March 28, 2024

We are bringing forward this resolution to add our voice to those of over 100 other municipalities around the United States demanding that humanitarian aid reach the civilian population of Gaza, which is facing famine, a lack of potable water, and a lack of medical care to the point of extreme crisis. We focus purposefully on the humanitarian catastrophe and not on the military and political causes of the disaster, nor on long-term solutions to the conflict between Hamas and the State of Israel. In order for humanitarian aid to reach the civilians in dire need, a cessation of hostilities must take place. Aid cannot reach needy families while bombs are falling, roads are destroyed, and fuel is lacking. Air drops and a temporary floating pier are insufficient and unsafe. A ceasefire is needed.

We recognize that there are humanitarian disasters unfolding in many parts of the world. The difference with Gaza is that our taxpayer dollars as American residents are being used to send weapons to one of the warring parties. Also, we have received a petition with hundreds of local signatories as well as direct contact by many in Bloomington asking for us as local elected officials to make a statement against the humanitarian catastrophe on their behalf. We also note that some community members are opposed to the Common Council taking any action on this topic at all. After many conversations with Bloomington residents both in favor of and against a resolution, we decided to move ahead due to what we feel is a moral imperative to speak out about the man-made humanitarian catastrophe.

The Common Council of the City of Bloomington has long embraced diversity, upheld the humanity and rights of all people, and spoken out against racism, xenophobia, and bigotry. We condemn antisemitism and want Jews to feel safe in our city. We condemn Islamophobia and want Muslims to feel safe in our city. We do not presume to know how to resolve the complicated, nuanced, long-standing conflict between the State of Israel and the Palestinian people. What we intend is to speak out against the intolerable cruelty of children dying of hunger, women subjected to surgery without anesthetic, and Gazans of all ages stricken by preventable disease due to unsafe drinking water. The world must come to the aid of the civilian people of Gaza. It is our duty to demand that President Biden and our Congressional delegation do whatever they can to pressure all parties to cease the violence in order to save innocent lives.

We encourage you to support Resolution 2024-08.