

No Ceasefire Resolution

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Good Morning Mayor, Councilors, and Clerk,

I believe that the events that unfolded on 6/4 clearly illustrate that a ceasefire resolution is not good for Malden. The ugliness on display in the plaza has no place in our city. Hatred is fomented by officiated actions like this. Those with antisemitic views see them as an invitation. Incidents have never been more prevalent in my lifetime than in these past 8 months. Simply reviewing the appalling behavior of the 'Yes' camp should make that self evident. Allow me to provide some much needed context.

Chants and signs reading "from the river to the sea" were present in and outside of the council chambers. A more direct and historical interpretation of this phrase is: "from the water to the water, Palestine is Arab". It and it's proclainers explicitly call for the destruction of the State of Israel and Jews by violent, genocidal means. Some of those who champion this phrase include Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, the Houthis, the Taliban, and Iran. The U.S. House of Representatives approved a motion that finds this speech antisemitic.

I'd also like to bring your attention to the recent successful rescue of four Israeli hostages on 6/8. The four were being held in a densely populated residential area. It was a refugee camp. Hostages have also been found under hospitals and other safe zones. This should surprise nobody. Hamas routinely hides amongst the innocents they govern and use them not only as human shields, but as political tools. They launch attacks from hospitals, mosques, schools, etc (which makes them legitimate targets according to the rules of war) to incite outrage over the ensuing casualties. The leader of Hamas has stated that the deaths of civilians are GOOD for their cause and a necessary sacrifice. The only thing Palestine needs to be freed from is Islamic militant rule and the violent ideology there within.

President Biden's administration is working with Israel, Egypt, and Qatar (which doesn't even formally recognize Israel as a nation by the way) on ceasefire negotiations, which Hamas has not yet endorsed. The fact that there is no benefit locally for this should be enough reason to vote no, but these efforts are already being made. US involvement at the UN and on the ground in Israel has yielded terms that could regrettably leave Hamas intact, if agreed to. U.S. aid is being delivered directly to Gaza. Action is being taken. What would a city resolution accomplish?

All of the above ought to render this action moot. Discussion in pursuit of community healing is one thing, but this is nothing more than an affirmation of one community at the expense of another. I urge you all once again to vote this down. Don't allow the kind of lunacy displayed at the previous meeting to have its way. Vote No.

Thank you.

Notes regarding 6/4 for the Record:

1. Israel is not an Apartheid state. Anyone who thinks it is should reacquaint themselves with the definition. All citizens of Israel, whether they are Jewish, Arab, Druze, etc. are granted full and equal rights under the law (Gaza and the West Bank are not part of Israel). This is in stark contrast to many Islamic states where women and non-Muslims are treated as lesser. What happened to all the Jewish communities in the wider Middle East, I wonder?
2. Israel is not perpetrating a genocide of Palestinians. Prior to the current war in Gaza, and despite regular flare ups of conflict, the Palestinian population has been increasing. Israel has also produced the lowest ratio of combatant to civilian casualties of any urban war EVER. If the goal was to erase these people as a whole, they're doing a terrible job. Especially because Palestinians make up at least a fifth of the population IN Israel too. Hyperbole at its finest.
3. The use of terms like the ones above and others such as 'IOF' (Israeli Occupation Forces) aim to cast Israel and Jews in a negative light. 'Zionist' is used as code for Jew, which doesn't make it any less threatening or antisemitic when they call for 'intifada' which has historically been a cry for retribution and violence.
4. Calling terrorists 'resistance fighters' is a poor attempt to distort the truth and change the narrative. Hamas and their supporting militant groups and funders are thieves, kidnapers, rapists, murderers, terrorists, and war criminals. The fact that the majority of the civilian population of Gaza and the Palestinian diaspora choose to support them is deeply problematic and sad.
5. The speaker at the 6/4 meeting who said he "isn't aware of the group claiming to speak for the Jewish community", and who's only lived here for 8 years, obviously didn't make any effort to look.

Respectfully,

Matthew Weldai
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