



Dear Arlington Town Meeting Members,

Please be advised that the Arlington Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has voted (8-1) to endorse the 2024 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 5: Article Resolution for a Ceasefire Proclamation. We reviewed the original draft proclamation (included below) submitted to the Select Board for review on April 24 by Chadi Salamoun.

In April, the AHRC held four listening sessions on the impact of the violence in Israel and Gaza on Arlington residents. We heard testimony from approximately 100 residents on Zoom, and received over 100 written submissions. ([Our report](#) is included as another submission to this Annotated Warrant.) In listening, we observed many direct impacts of this crisis on Arlington residents that has resulted in much pain and fear.

The AHRC routinely provides commentary on submitted Town Meeting warrant articles related to their impact on human rights. The AHRC has carefully considered the full draft of the proclamation and chosen to endorse it. We did so in light of the direct impacts of this crisis to both the people and discourse in our town. We believe the statement's bilateral call for peace, universal recognition of rights, and calls for mutual understanding and co-existence are consistent with both the AHRC's principles and the town's greater aspirations for equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The AHRC hopes you will support this Article as we do, as an expression of common humanity and a rejection of antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Thank you,

Griffin Jones (Precinct 2) and Drake Pusey (Precinct 13)
Co-Chairs, Arlington Human Rights Commission

Here is the text of the original draft that we endorsed:

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the Town of Arlington recognizes that all human life is precious, regardless of race, ethnicity, color, religious views, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, citizenship, age, ancestry, sexual orientation and/or ability/disability, and that the targeting of civilians is a violation of international humanitarian law; and,

WHEREAS, since October 7, 2023, at least 1,200 Israelis and 33,000 Palestinians have been killed, and civilians have been deliberately targeted and continue to suffer greatly; and,

WHEREAS, hostages continue to be held captive without regard to their legal and human rights; and that thus far, the only successful effort to secure the release of a large number of hostages was through an agreed upon ceasefire in November 2023; and,

WHEREAS, the ongoing violence has also led to the displacement of more than 135,000 civilians in Israel and 90,000 civilians in Lebanon; and,

WHEREAS, the ongoing military campaign and blockade of Gaza has caused a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, including the repeated displacement of more than 1.9 million people, the overwhelming destruction of the healthcare system and civilian infrastructure, and widespread hunger and famine; and

WHEREAS, international organizations such as Amnesty International, the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Rescue Committee, and many others, have made a call for a ceasefire in order to avert further loss of civilian life and to be in accordance with international humanitarian law; and,

WHEREAS, the continuing violence undermines the international order, has already killed at least four US military personnel, is central to a series of escalations that endangers civilians and US military personnel, and risks a wider war; and,

WHEREAS, taxes paid by Arlington residents are contributing to the ongoing violence and humanitarian suffering of Palestinian civilians; and,

WHEREAS, Arlington's Palestinian, Israeli, Jewish, Muslim, and Arab residents, among others, are experiencing trauma, grief, shock, and fear, compounded by increased incidents of Islamophobia, antisemitism and anti-Palestinian hate, both nationally and locally; and,

WHEREAS, we, as members of the Arlington community, must first acknowledge the particular and directly experienced pain, suffering, and anger of those among us who are most impacted by the current circumstances in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank, and also recognize the clear impact on all members of the Arlington community as we witness the increasing scale of violence and suffering in the region;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Arlington supports an immediate and permanent ceasefire across all of Gaza, the West Bank, Israel, and neighboring countries; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Arlington unequivocally condemns deliberate attacks on civilians and thereby calls for the release of all hostages and the uninhibited provision of life-saving humanitarian aid to Gaza; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Arlington supports a diplomatic solution for Palestinians and Israelis based upon the values of dignity, equity, justice, and international law; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Arlington urges the Biden Administration, the Senate, and the House of Representatives to commit to an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the release of all hostages, the immediate provision of all life-saving aid, and a diplomatic solution for Palestinians and Israelis based upon international law; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the offices of The President of the United States, Joseph Biden, Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Ed Markey, and Congresswoman Katherine Clark; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that through the passing of this resolution, this Town Meeting collectively condemns all forms of racism, bigotry, and discrimination, and furthermore, that we extend our support to members of our Arlington community who are affected by this crisis, and furthermore, that we reaffirm our commitment to those bodies in Arlington which have specifically been created to foster a more equitable, just and liveable community for all in Arlington and beyond.