

Collective Statement of Oldham Mosques and Seminaries

Date: 17 November 2023

In the name of Allah the most merciful the most beneficent.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) stated “*Anyone of you who sees any evil, let them change it with their hand. If they are unable, then let them change it by speaking out against it. If they are unable, then let them feel it to be wrong in their heart and that is the weakest of faith.*” (Sahih Muslim)

We the undersigned make this joint statement following the Parliamentary vote that took place on 15 November 2023 regarding the amendment to the King’s Speech calling for a ceasefire in the ongoing Israeli aggression in Gaza. The amendment was not passed, and as a result the killing of innocent civilians and violations of human rights continue.

We voice the collective concerns of our respective congregations and attendees following this disappointing result.

At the time of the vote, over 14,000 civilians had been killed, including over 4,500 children, hospitalsⁱ, mosquesⁱⁱ, churchesⁱⁱⁱ and schools^{iv} had all been targeted. Collective punishment of the Palestinian population^v, forced displacement of residents to Southern Gaza^{vi} and ethnic cleansing^{vii} on a scale not seen since the holocaust had all been well documented.

The Prime Minister stood with Benjamin Netanyahu and sought victory for Israel^{viii} whilst the opposition leader, Kier Starmer, condoned Israel’s war crimes openly^{ix} and continues to refuse calls for a ceasefire^x. The vote in Parliament was a damning indictment of the UK’s morality and will be recorded in history as one of the many moral failures during the ongoing genocide.

MPs and councillors are expected to reflect the voice and sentiments of their constituents. Unfortunately, Oldham has been failed by our MPs and councillors in this regard.

We believe that 7 October 2023 was not the start of the conflict, but a result of years of oppression, ethnic cleansing, violations of human rights, illegal annexation of land. Since the start of this current aggression against the Palestinian people, we have been extremely concerned and disappointed at Oldham Council's failure to call for an immediate ceasefire. Weak notions such as "*working towards a ceasefire*"^{xi} will not be accepted. Every few minutes a child is killed in Palestine^{xii}, yet the Council generally, and its Labour councillors more specifically, continue to resist calls for an **immediate** ceasefire.

Regretfully, Jim McMahon and Debbie Abrahams, MPs for Oldham West & Royton and Oldham East & Saddleworth respectively, abstained from voting in favour of a ceasefire^{xiii}. Instead of standing for and voicing the sentiments of their constituents, our congregations and attendees, they shockingly abstained from voting – a vote that for many was the most important issue at this time. There is no excuse for missing or abstaining from such an important vote.

We reiterate a stance that many of our congregation has voiced: no ceasefire no vote. Your failure today will be something that the Muslim community of Oldham will remember and be reminded of at election time. The issue is not one of politics, but of humanity. Your conduct so far has shown that you have chosen party politics over humanity, and this is not something we can condone or support.

We demand that Oldham's Councillors of all parties and MPs collectively and/or individually:

1. Come on record **via official party channels** demanding an **immediate ceasefire**.
2. Come on record **via official party channels** demanding the **immediate and unimpeded** entry of humanitarian aid, including food, water, sanitary products and fuel, into Gaza.
3. Come on record **via official party channels** condemning the killing of all innocent civilians in Palestine.
4. Come on record **via official party channels** condemning the historic and current escalated Israeli violence and attacks in the West Bank.

5. Call for the **immediate resignation** of Kier Starmer as the leader of the Labour party, as he has lost the confidence of our congregations and your constituents.

Should you be unable to do any of the above due to party restrictions, we seek your resignations as MPs and Councillors from your respective parties so that you may voice these concerns openly and freely.

Signatories (alphabetical order)

1. **Al Madina Jamia Masjid**
230 Waterloo Street, Oldham, OL4 1ES (*St Mary's Ward*)
2. **Azmat e Islam Masjid**
79-85 Retford Street, Oldham, OL4 1BL (*St Mary's Ward*)
3. **Bilal Jamia Masjid**
19 23 Ronald St, Oldham OL4 1NE (*Waterhead Ward*)
4. **Faizan e Madina**
Huxley Street, Oldham, OL4 3AJ (*Waterhead Ward*)
5. **Ihya Institute**
4 Kew Road, Oldham, OL4 1QB (*St Mary's Ward*)
6. **Jamia Al Karimia**
Havelock Street, Oldham, OL8 1JR (*Alexandra Ward*)
7. **Jamia Islamia Ghausia**
87 Warwick Street, Oldham, OL9 7EB (*Werneth Ward*)
8. **Jamia Masjid Hayat Nabi**
138 Werneth Hall Rd, Oldham OL8 1QZ (*Werneth Ward*)
9. **Jamia Masjid Saifia**
120 Waterloo Street, Oldham, OL4 1EU (*St Mary's Ward*)
10. **Jamia Masjid Greengate**
88 Greengate St, Oldham OL4 1DH (*St Mary's Ward*)
11. **Jamia Mohiyyul Islam**
14 Copster Hill Rd, Oldham OL8 1QB (*Medlock Vale Ward*)
12. **Jamia Naqshbandiyya**
Pitt Street East, Oldham, OL4 1BU (*St Mary's Ward*)

13. Jamia Shamsia Qamar ul Uloom

102 Abbeyhills Road, Oldham, OL8 2DG (*Alexandra Ward*)

14. Madina Institute Oldham

Carlson House, Jackson Street, Oldham, OL4 1HU (*St Mary's Ward*)

15. Madina Masjid and Islamic Centre

Clydesdale Street, Oldham, OL8 1BT (*Medlock Vale Ward*)

16. Madina tul Ilm

24 Nugget Street, Oldham, OL4 1BN (*St Mary's Ward*)

17. Madrassa Al Quba

119 Napier Street East, Oldham, OL8 1TS (*Werneth Ward*)

18. Madrassa Irshadul Islam

28 Gartside Street, Oldham, OL4 1BX (*St Mary's Ward*)

19. Madrassah Taleem ul Quran

201 Lees Road, Oldham, OL4 1LS (*St Mary's Ward*)

20. Markazi Jamia Masjid Mohra Sharif

20 Villa Road, Oldham, OL8 1PL (*Alexandra Ward*)

21. Nagina Jamia Masjid

74 Werneth Hall Rd, Oldham OL8 4BB (*Werneth Ward*)

22. Noor e Islam

44-46 Manchester Road, Oldham, OL9 7AP (*Werneth Ward*)

23. Shahjalal Mosque & Islamic Centre

33-37 Stuart Street, Oldham, OL8 1SD (*Werneth Ward*)

24. Werneth Jamia Masjid

116 Manchester Road, Oldham, OL9 7AX (*Werneth Ward*)

25. Compass Learning Centre

Stock Lane, Chadderton, Oldham OL9 9EY (*Chadderton Central Ward*)

ⁱ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/14/gaza-unlawful-israeli-hospital-strikes-worsen-health-crisis>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/fatalities-as-israel-strikes-mosque-in-central-gaza-medical-source/3025238#:~:text=GAZA%20CITY%2C%20Palestine,%2C%E2%80%9D%20a%20medical%20source%20said.>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/20/war-crime-israel-bombs-gaza-church-sheltering-displaced-people>

-
- iv <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/10/gaza-hospital-says-received-50-bodies-after-strikes-on-school>
- v <https://www.reuters.com/world/un-experts-say-israels-strikes-gaza-amount-collective-punishment-2023-10-12/>
- vi <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/israel-opt-appalling-gaza-evacuation-order-must-be-rescinded-by-israel-immediately/>
- vii <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/10/un-expert-warns-new-instance-mass-ethnic-cleansing-palestinians-calls>
- viii <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2023/10/19/rishi-sunak-britain-israel-to-win-war-netanyahu-hamas-gaza/>
- ix <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-67182063>
- x <https://www.politico.eu/article/uk-keir-starmer-refusal-call-ceasefire-gaza-labour/>
- xi <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=758485286292798&set=a.318580833616581>
- xii <https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2023/nov/11/one-child-killed-in-gaza-every-10-minutes-on-average-says-who-chief-video#:~:text=One%20child%20killed%20in%20Gaza,average%2C%20says%20WHO%20chief%20%E2%80%93%20video&text=World%20news>
- xiii <https://votes.parliament.uk/votes/commons/division/1666#notrecorded>

