



The Tompkins County Human Rights Commission  
Resolution

December 18, 2023

A Unified Call for a Ceasefire in Gaza;  
Urgent Humanitarian and Local imperatives.

*The Tompkins County Human Rights Commission*

*Guided* by the purpose and mission of the Tompkins County Human Rights Commission “to encourage equality; discourage discrimination; and to serve as an Advisory Board to the Office of Human Rights and to the Tompkins County Legislature,<sup>1</sup> and

*Noting* that the Security Council of the United Nations reaffirmed on November 15, 2023, that “all parties to conflicts must adhere to their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law,” and

*Recalling further* all relevant international law, in particular, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,<sup>2</sup>

*Gravely Conscious* that the actions of Hamas and of the Government of Israel have impeded the fundamental rights of people to life, liberty and security of persons as enshrined in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

*Recognizing* that the tax dollars of the residents of Tompkins County are part of the funds being used to provide military support to several countries overseas including Ukraine, Jordan, Afghanistan, Egypt, and Israel<sup>3</sup> and

*Recalling* that over half (56%) of our tax dollars go to the military (excluding veterans’ benefits),<sup>4</sup> cutting into our ability to provide what county residents need, such as low-income housing, adequate public transportation and health care, and

*Expressing deep concern* that locally, the crisis in Gaza is affecting our campuses and communities in Tompkins County in disturbing ways, including increased antisemitism and islamophobia, polarization of opinions, mental health issues and saturated support services, and,

---

<sup>1</sup> Tompkins County Human Rights Commission Bylaws

<sup>2</sup> UN News, December 6k 2023; See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.; United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, No. 27531; United Nations, Treaty Series vol. 1249, No. 20378.

<sup>3</sup> The Guardian, December 7, 2023; & US News “Countries That Receive the Most Foreign Aid From the U.S”. October 13, 2023

<sup>4</sup> National Priorities Project, March 27, 2023

*Expressing grave concern* that 1,200 Israelis died in the attack by Hamas, with many others abducted and injured, and their communities devastated,

*Expressing grave concern* that the death toll of Palestinians in Gaza from Israeli attacks now approaches 19,000 including 7,000 children<sup>5</sup>, with thousands more trapped under the rubble<sup>6</sup> ;

*Noting* that 80% of people in Gaza are now homeless<sup>7</sup>; that 9/10ths now lack enough food and clean water and 50% are starving with the first starvation deaths recently reported<sup>8</sup>;

*Emphasizing* that the medical system in Gaza is collapsing and the World Health Organization has called for an end to the bombardment<sup>9</sup>;

*Expressing concern* that in the absence of a ceasefire, Congress is currently considering legislation that would allocate an additional \$14 billion for military assistance to Israel<sup>10</sup>;

*Expressing concern* that the Biden Administration has invoked the “Arms Export Control Act emergency declaration” to bypass Congress to provide Israel with ammunition for tanks,<sup>11</sup> and

*Deeply concerned* about the negative impact, including the health and psychological consequences, of violence on the present and future well-being of children in the region, as well as on residents of our county;

*therefore,*

1. *Strongly Urges* our County Legislature to join other jurisdictions in calling on our President and Congress Members to demand an immediate & sustainable ceasefire; release of all hostages, unrestricted entry of humanitarian assistance into Gaza; the restoration of food, water, electricity, and medical supplies to Gaza; and the respect for international human rights law.
2. *Appreciates* the role of the Tompkins County Legislature and further *calls upon* it to provide strong leadership in proactively countering the various forms of fear, anxiety, intimidation, discrimination, and hate experienced by members of the local Jewish and Muslim communities.
3. *Urges* the Tompkins County Legislature and other agencies to remind county residents of the resources available for those experiencing discriminatory treatment including support from the Tompkins County Office of Human Rights, and

---

<sup>5</sup> Democracy Now! radio program December 15, 2023

<sup>6</sup> Jewish Voice for Peace, December 1, 2023

<sup>7</sup> UNWRA Situation Report #48, December 7-9, 2023

<sup>8</sup> Democracy Now! Radio program December 11, 2023

<sup>9</sup> World Health Organization, December 10, 2023

<sup>10</sup> National Public Radio, November 4, 2023

<sup>11</sup> The Guardian, “Biden bypasses Congress to sell tank shells to Israel amid further fighting in Khan Younis” December 10, 2023

4. *Stresses* the importance for all Tompkins County residents, agencies, educational institutions, and other authorities to do everything in their power to protect and support all county residents who may be experiencing various forms of discrimination related to this conflict, including increased antisemitism and islamophobia.

Note: The above Tompkins County Human Rights Commission Resolution was passed on December 18, 2023, with an 8-1 vote in favor of the resolution (and one commissioner absent).

Signed



Professor Peyi Soyinka-Airewele  
Commission Chairperson.

---

TOMPKINS COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONERS

NJOKU AWA | LADY AJAYI | JO CARCICH | PEACHES GILLETTE | LARRY ROBERTS | RUTH YARROW  
THERESA FULTON (SECRETARY) | AMOS MALONE (TREASURER) | JOANNA GREEN (VICE-CHAIR)  
PEYI SOYINKA-AIREWELE (CHAIRPERSON)