

Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 24 March 2025

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Council members present:

Councillor Qayyum	Councillor Azad
Councillor Jupp	Councillor Max Morris
Councillor Regisford	Councillor Stares
Councillor Yeatman	Councillor Harley
Councillor Henwood	Councillor Altaf-Khan
Councillor Arshad	Councillor Brown
Councillor Chapman	Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Corais (Deputy Lord Mayor)	Councillor Coyne
Councillor Diggins	Councillor Djafari-Marbini
Councillor Fouweather	Councillor Fry (Sheriff)
Councillor Gant	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Jarvis	Councillor Kerr
Councillor Latif	Councillor Lygo
Councillor Malik	Councillor Miles
Councillor Muddiman	Councillor Mundy
Councillor Munkonge	Councillor Pressel
Councillor Railton	Councillor Rawle
Councillor Rehman	Councillor Sandelson
Councillor Linda Smith	Councillor Roz Smith
Councillor Snowton	Councillor Turner
Councillor Upton	Councillor Waite
Councillor Goddard	Councillor Ottino
Councillor Powell	Councillor Rowley (Lord Mayor)

Also present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive
Nigel Kennedy, Group Director Finance
Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy

Amber Khagoon, Trainee Solicitor

Emma Griffiths, Deputy Monitoring Officer

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager

Hannah Carmody-Brown, Committee and Member Services Officer

Tom Bridgman, Deputy Chief Executive - Place

Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive - Citizen and City Services

Apologies:

Councillor(s) Robinson and Hollingsworth sent apologies.

The minutes show when Councillors who were absent for part of the meeting arrived and left.

90. Apologies for absence

Councillor(s) Robinson and Hollingsworth sent apologies.

Councillor Latif would join the meeting late.

91. Declarations of interest

Councillor Gant declared an interest in items 16b, 16c, 16g, and 16h, due to his role as the Cabinet Member for Transport Management for Oxfordshire County Council. He agreed that he would leave the room for these items.

Councillor Ottino declared, in relation to item 16a, that he receives income from the Oxfordshire pension fund as his late partner was an employee of Oxfordshire County Council. He also noted that his current partner is employed by Oxfordshire County Council. Councillor Ottino would remain in the meeting for the duration of any debate relating to this item.

Councillor Diggins declared her employment as a teacher in relation to item 16d; the Lord Mayor confirmed it was not a declarable interest.

92. Minutes

Council resolved to **approve** the minutes of the meetings held on Monday 27 January 2025 and Thursday 13 February 2025 as a true and accurate record.

93. Appointment to Committees

None.

94. Announcements

The Lord Mayor announced his recent attendance at the Oxford Centre of Islamic Studies where he participated in Iftar and met the Deputy Prime Minister, the Faith Minister, and the High Commissioners to Pakistan and Bangladesh. Council heard of discussions regarding Oxford's diverse immigrant communities and the importance of diverse representation across institutions, such as the universities and Councils.

The Lord Mayor also informed Council of his attendance at an event at the Oxford Playhouse with the Primary Playmaker Scheme which is in its tenth year. Council heard that the programme brings together children from areas of deprivation to provide professional support for writing short plays and developing future skills.

The Leader of the Council notified members of her recent correspondence with the Mayor of Ramallah following recent events on the West Bank. Council heard that the Leader has written back expressing deep sorrow and concern. Council was informed that the letter would be circulated.

The City Rector remembered Oscar Romero, an Archbishop from El Salvador, who on the date of this meeting in 1980, was killed during a church service. Council heard how Oscar Romero used his platform to speak for those who were voiceless and act for the needs of others.

95. Public addresses and questions that relate to matters for decision at this meeting

There were no addresses or questions.

96. Amendment to Political Proportionality

Council received a report from the Monitoring Officer asking Council to consider a change of seat allocation on the Scrutiny Committee from the Real Independents Group to the Oxford Independent Group.

Councillor Brown introduced the report and proposed the recommendations, noting to Council that it requires no one to vote against it in order for it to carry through.

On being seconded by Councillor Jarvis, the recommendations were put to a vote and **agreed.**

97. Improving Recruitment and Retention of Talent

Council received a report from the Head of People requesting approval the policy for the payment of market allowances.

Councillor Chapman introduced the report and proposed the recommendations, explaining that it summarises the pay and rewards provided to Oxford City Council employees and outlines the how market allowances are utilised to supplement pay order to attract and retain talent.

Councillor Roz Smith enquired as to whether the Cabinet member felt that the policy will reduce the money being spent on temporary recruitment agencies to which Councillor Chapman clarified that certainty around alternative costs could not be provided, but emphasised his belief that without the policy, it would be more challenging to recruit people to those positions which are more difficult to fill.

On being seconded by Councillor Brown the recommendations were put to a vote and agreed. Council **approved** the report.

98. Pay Policy Statement 2025-2026

Council received a report from the Head of People regarding the annual Pay Policy Statement for 2025-2026.

Councillor Chapman introduced the report and proposed the recommendations, noting that the requirement for an annual report has existed since the 2011 Localities Act. Council heard that the report summarises how Council employees are paid and that no changes are expected for next year as Council is mid-way through a two-year pay settlement.

On being seconded by Councillor Brown, the recommendations were put to a vote and **agreed**.

99. Extension of Term of Appointments of Independent Persons

Council received a report from the Monitoring Officer asking for authorisation to extend the terms of office of the Council's independent persons for a further four months to July 2025.

Councillor Diggins introduced the report and proposed the recommendations.

On being seconded by Councillor Mundy the recommendations were put to a vote and agreed.

100. Questions on Cabinet minutes

101. Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 5 February 2025

Councillor Roz Smith, in relation to the report on Grant Allocations to community and voluntary organisations for the year 2025/26, queried the timing of grant decisions and asked whether all will be taken by the end of July. Specific reference was made to Headington Festival. Councillor Linda Smith emphasised that the timetable for the grant programme is published, is publicly available, and cannot be varied. Instead, it was recommended that members utilise ward budgets to support events such as Headington Festival, if required.

102. Draft Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 12 March 2025

In relation to item 14 of the minutes, Councillor Miles asked whether the Council has conducted any analysis of savings and efficiency for the three unitary proposals in relation to devolution. Councillor Brown confirmed that this work has begun.

In regards item 139 of the minutes on homelessness, Councillor Fouweather asked when a report on the outcome of the Housing First scheme can be expected. Councillor Linda Smith confirmed that work is ongoing to assess expansion possibilities and to increase the number of tenancies using the Housing First model. Council heard that a report could be expected at the Housing and Homelessness Panel.

103. Draft Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 19 March 2025

No questions were raised.

104. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

42 written questions were asked of the Cabinet Members and the Leader, and these and written responses were published before the meeting.

These along with summaries of the 18 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

The Lord Mayor informed Council that item 15 (Scrutiny Committee Update report) would be considered next as the public speaker for item 13 would not be in attendance until 19.30.

105. Outside organisation/Committee Chair reports and questions

None.

106. Scrutiny Committee update report

Council had before it the report of the Scrutiny Committee Chair.

Councillor Miles provided Council an update on the work of the Scrutiny Committee and its panels in the period from 29 January 2025 to 3 March 2025 during which the Scrutiny Committee had met twice, and each of the three panels had met once.

The Scrutiny Committee had discussed eight substantive items including the Equalities Update, the Annual Business Plan, and the Adult Exploitation Modern Slavery Update. 14 recommendations were made to Cabinet, of which 10 were accepted, 1 was accepted in part, and 3 were rejected.

Council also heard that the panels collectively reviewed nine substantive items and made 6 recommendations to Cabinet, all of which were agreed.

Councillor Miles thanked all officers and councillors for their presentations, recommendations, and responses.

Council raised no questions.

Council noted the report.

The Lord Mayor informed Council that, as all items on the agenda other than motions had been completed early and the public speaker would arrive before 19:30, item 16b would now be considered.

107. Motions on notice March 2025

Council had before it 9 motions on notice submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules and reached decisions as set out below.

Motions agreed as set out below:

- a) Strengthening Ethical Procurement and Investment Policies to Reaffirm Oxford City Council's Commitment to Human Rights and International Law (proposed by Cllr Barbara Coyne, Seconded by Cllr Dr Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini)

Motions taken but lost:

- b) Impact of Traffic Filters (Proposed by Cllr Saj Malik, Seconded by Cllr. Mohammed Azad)

Motions not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished:

- c) Devolution (Proposed by Cllr. Susan Brown, Seconded by Cllr. Anna Railton)
- d) Ban Smartphones in Oxford Schools (Proposed by Cllr. Jo Sandelson, Seconded by Cllr Andrew Gant)
- e) Standing up for the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and all of Oxford's community (Proposed by Cllr Alex Powell, Seconded by Cllr Dianne Regisford)
- f) Decent and Genuinely Affordable Housing for All (Proposed by Cllr. Linda Smith, Seconded by Cllr. Ed Turner)
- g) School Transport Support (Proposed by Cllr. Katherine Miles, Seconded by Cllr. Roz Smith)
- h) Better Bus Connectivity – Putting People Before Profit (Proposed by Cllr. Simon Ottino, Seconded by Cllr. Tiago Corais)
- i) Youth Mobility Scheme (Proposed by Cllr. Laurence Fouweather, Seconded by Cllr. Theo Jupp)

108.Impact of Traffic Filters (Proposed by Cllr Saj Malik, Seconded by Cllr. Mohammed Azad)

Councillor Malik, seconded by Councillor Azad, proposed the amended motion as set out in the briefing note.

Councillor Brown left and rejoined the meeting during the discussion of this item.

Councillor Arshad left and rejoined the meeting during the discussion of this item.

Councillor Diggins left the meeting left the meeting.

The Lord Mayor invited Council to take a short break at 18.25 for 10 minutes.

Council resumed at 18.35.

Councillor Regisford rejoined the meeting following the break.

Following debate and on being put to the vote, the motion was **lost**.

The Council notes that Oxfordshire County Council refuses to commit to a thorough economic impact assessment of the likely effects of the traffic filters on Oxford's small business community, instead focusing on three quantitative metrics (Mastercard spend, footfall and shop vacancy rates) plus qualitative business surveys as part of stakeholder engagement.¹

The City Council believes that these metrics fail to offer an accurate assessment of the economic impact on small businesses which would be better evaluated by reference to turnover, and staff numbers.

This Council therefore requests that the Cabinet Member for Planning:

1. Look to commission and publish its own independent survey of Oxford's businesses with regard to the economic impact of the traffic filters with particular reference to businesses' turnover and staff numbers impact, which will help the council properly understand the impact.
2. Commits to working closely with existing Oxford small business groups in order to maximise the response of the survey.

¹ [Microsoft Word - Appx A Traffic Filter M&E Plan Monitoring Data & Evidence v2.2 accessible.docx](#)

109. Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision at this Council meeting

Council heard 1 address and Cabinet Members read or summarised their written responses. Both addresses and responses are set out in full in the minutes pack.

1. Address from Professor Nick Maynard – Support for Motion 16a

The Lord Mayor invited Council to break until 19.30.

Council resumed at 19.31.

Councillor Latif joined the meeting following the break.

110. Strengthening Ethical Procurement and Investment Policies to Reaffirm Oxford City Council's Commitment to Human Rights and International Law (proposed by Cllr Barbara Coyne, Seconded by Cllr Dr Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini)

The Lord Mayor notified Council that any debate of motion 16a should relate only to the text of the motion as written, and not the attached footnotes which exceed the 500-word allowance. The Lord Mayor invited the Section 151 Officer (Group Finance Director) to provide some context to Council, noting that this would not subtract from the time allowed for debate. Council understood that 30 minutes remained for the debate.

The Group Finance Director spoke in relation to the motion, reminding Council that as the Section 151 Officer he is legally required to consider all investments under the principles of security, liquidity and yield. Any aspect of the motion which can legally be implemented will be, otherwise Cabinet will take the matter into consideration.

Debate of motion 16a resumed at 19.34.

Councillor Coyne, seconded by Councillor Dr. Djafari-Marbini, proposed the motion as set out in the briefing note.

During debate of this motion Council agreed to suspend standing orders.

Following debate and on being put to the vote, the motion was **agreed**.

Council notes:

- Oxford City Council's commitment to human rights, equality and justice is longstanding. We have democratically embedded ethical policies and practices across our administration. Our progressive procurement policies support local jobs, small businesses, the Oxford Living Wage, apprenticeships and social value; and our Treasury Management Strategy includes an ESG policy recently approved at budget council. We are committed to representing every resident in our international city, challenging inequalities, and upholding the fundamental rights and freedoms of all.
- Our leader has noted "the historic role of ethical boycotts, which have played a pivotal role in campaigns for justice" and "Oxford's prominent role in the anti-apartheid movement", which culminated in Nelson Mandela's 1997 visit.
- Over the past year, successive International Court of Justice (ICJ) rulings have underlined UN member states' obligation to actively avoid complicity in Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine and grave violations of human rights, with UN experts warning that continued inaction "jeopardises the entire edifice of international law".
- Under international law, the legal norms that apply to a state extend to local authorities.
- Council has previously written to Barclays Bank to ask it to desist from fossil fuel investments.

Council believes that:

- We have an ethical duty and legal obligation to avoid trade and investment relations and cooperation with entities that legitimise, aid or assist violations of international law.
- The Oxfordshire Pension Fund—to which Council employees and city residents contribute—should adhere to similarly robust ethical standards, in line with its fiduciary duty towards scheme members and employers.

Council resolves to:

- Request that the cabinet member for finance and asset management bring forward to the next review of the Treasury Management Strategy and the Procurement Strategy costed policies that incorporate, wherever possible and in line with applicable legislation, the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (UN PRI) and Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP); and that explicitly preclude Council knowingly, indirectly or directly, investing in or trading with entities implicated in the following, henceforth referred to as "the proscribed activities":
 - fossil fuel extraction, processing, or trade;

- state violence and repression, war and occupation comprising grave violations of human rights as defined in international law (including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide);
- the production of weapons, weapon parts, or military equipment where there is risk of the above violations being committed.
- Request that the leader write a letter urging the Oxfordshire Pension Fund Committee to work with Brunel to:
 - extend existing investment exclusions and restrictions to encompass the proscribed activities, anywhere in the world;
 - divest from current investee entities known to be involved in the proscribed activities; and
 - commit to ensuring that all investee entities adopt and rigorously implement the UNGP, in addition to the UN Global Compact.
- When we retender our banking contract with Barclays, commit to an ethically robust procurement process that takes due note of the proscribed activities; and commit to bringing forward information on costs involved in changing bank accounts to the 2026 budget debate for councillors' decision.
- Request that the cabinet member for business, culture and an inclusive economy issue and actively disseminate a statement encouraging local businesses and institutions to follow Council's example in developing robust ethical trade and investment policies and practices, aligned with international law and standards.
- Where no contrary legal requirement exists, forgo cooperation with authorities, institutions or groups that participate in, enable, profit from or legitimise the proscribed activities.
- Ensure that Council implements the above policies and that these are operated and effective, once adopted.

Councillor Sandelson left the meeting at the end of this item.

111.Devolution (Proposed by Cllr Susan Brown, Seconded by Cllr Anna Railton)

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

112.Ban Smartphones in Oxford Schools (Proposed by Cllr. Jo Sandelson, Seconded by Cllr Andrew Gant)

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

113.Standing up for the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and all of Oxford's community (Proposed by Cllr Alex Powell, Seconded by Cllr Dianne Regisford)

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

114.Decent and Genuinely Affordable Housing for All (Proposed by Cllr Linda Smith, Seconded by Cllr. Ed Turner)

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

115.School Transport Support (Proposed by Cllr. Katherine Miles, Seconded by Cllr. Roz Smith)

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

116.Better Bus Connectivity – Putting People Before Profit (Proposed by Cllr Simon Ottino, Seconded by Cllr Tiago Corais)

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

117.Youth Mobility Scheme (Proposed by Cllr. Laurence Fouweather, Seconded by Cllr. Theo Jupp)

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.14 pm

Lord Mayor

Date: Thursday 15 May 2025

Decisions on items of business take effect immediately:

Motions may be implemented immediately or may require further budget provision and/or reports to Cabinet before implementation.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.

To: Council

Date: 24 March 2025

Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy

Title of Report: Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speakers and with written responses from Cabinet Members

Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council, and questions put to the Cabinet members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below. Any written responses available are also below.
2. The text reproduces that sent in the speakers and represents the views of the speakers. This is not to be taken as statements by or on behalf of the Council
3. This report will be republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This will list the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda

1. Address from Professor Nick Maynard – Support for Motion 16a (Strengthening Ethical Procurement and Investment Policies to Reaffirm Oxford City Council's Commitment to Human Rights and International Law)

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda

1. **Address from Professor Nick Maynard – Support for Motion 16a (Strengthening Ethical Procurement and Investment Policies to Reaffirm Oxford City Council's Commitment to Human Rights and International Law)**

I am here to speak in support of the motion before the Council to "Reaffirm Oxford City Council's Commitment to Human Rights and International Law". I have spent 4 weeks in Gaza over the last 18 months leading Emergency Medical Teams on behalf of MAP and have witnessed with my own eyes multiple war crimes committed by the Israeli military, which are clear breaches of International Law. These war crimes have been ignored by our government and our media, being silent whilst continuing to support Israel, allowing Israel to commit these war crimes, to commit genocide with impunity. The ceasefire in Gaza has been broken illegally by Israel – on March 18th alone 174 children were killed by the Israeli military. It is time for our politicians, both national and local, to stand up and speak out against these multiple breaches of International Law, and Oxford City Council must demonstrate their commitment to Human Rights and

International Law by publicly calling out these war crimes and demonstrating their support for Gaza.

In Gaza I witnessed things I never would have expected to see in any healthcare setting. I have witnessed deliberate targeted attacks on hospitals – not only since October 7th but indeed as far back as 2014 when Al Wafa Hospital, a beautiful neurorehabilitation hospital was completely destroyed by the Israeli Air Force. There have been many other hospitals which been targeted in the intervening years. Al Aqsa Hospital was attacked with Israeli missiles whilst I was operating on a critically injured lady on January 4th. Not only have the hospitals been bombed but the Israeli ground forces have systematically destroyed the laboratories, have systematically destroyed the dialysis machines, the CT and MRI scanners, the gas and water supplies and the sewage facilities in order to make them completely disabled and unable to function as hospitals. And let me completely dispel the false narrative given to us by Israeli spokesmen, and repeated by our media and politicians, that these hospitals have been used as Hamas command bases – none of us, not a single humanitarian worker that I know, has seen any evidence of Hamas militants in the hospitals. There is no credible evidence at all to support this narrative.

More than a thousand healthcare workers have been deliberately targeted and killed including friends of mine, people I have worked with over the years. Friends of mine have been discovered dead with bullets in their head and their hands handcuffed behind their back. Over 400 healthcare workers have been abducted and illegally detained and tortured. I have taken direct audio and video testimony from 2 individuals I worked with. Both were detained for 54 and 60 days respectively, having been abducted from Indonesian Hospital and Nasser Hospital. They both told identical stories of being stripped naked, handcuffed with their hands behind their backs, blindfolded, their genitals beaten, beaten up to 12 hrs per day, had dogs set on them repeatedly, and electrocuted. Adnan Al Bursh was a well-known orthopaedic surgeon who I briefly worked with in May 2023 – he was abducted and imprisoned and tortured to death. A detailed investigation by a Sky investigative journalist, speaking to many fellow detainees describe how he was serially raped to death for 2 weeks before he died.

70% of the patients I treated were women and children. Let me tell you about Aya and Ala, a brother and sister who were bombed in their home and whose parents were killed by the same bomb. They were brought to Al Aqsa Hospital as a mass casualty admission in January when I was there. Ala was 6 years old, and I discovered him lying unconscious on the floor of the waiting area not having been seen by anyone, and the first thing I noticed was a large hole in the side of his chest with air being sucked in and that is a rapidly fatal condition unless treated. He also had a hole in the head from shrapnel - we resuscitated and stabilised him but to this day I still do not know whether he survived. I suspect not. His sister, Aya, had a badly fractured leg and it was so displaced that it was cutting off the blood supply to her foot so that leg had to be straightened urgently. This was a day at al Aqsa Hospital, like most days, when we had run out of all pain relief. We had no strong pain relief, and her leg had to be straightened without any pain relief at all. I can still hear her screams as her leg was straightened, and those screams will haunt me for ever. Let me tell you about another girl whose name I never found out who came in with burns so bad to her face that my colleague could see her facial bones. She was never going to survive, not in Oxford, not in Gaza, but we could not even let her die peacefully. We had no pain relief to give her, and she died in agony in public lying on the floor of the waiting area of the emergency room

Let me tell you about Lama, an 18-year-old girl and Tala, a 16-year-old girl both blown up by Israeli bombs with severe internal injuries, whom I operated on. They had survivable injuries, but were already profoundly malnourished, as a result of the forced

starvation used as a weapon of war by the Israelis. Despite our surgery to repair their injuries they were unable to heal and died under my care of malnutrition, malnutrition caused by deliberate starvation by the Israeli government.

30 UK doctors and 90 USA doctors have written to our respective governments describing the multiple war crimes we have witnessed, and every one of us described our witnessing pre-teen children being shot in the head or torso – these are not collateral damage, these are multiple examples of Israeli soldiers deliberately targeting and killing children.

Political institutions throughout the UK, both national and local have failed Gaza – at best they have been silent whilst witnessing multiple breaches of International Humanitarian Law; at worst they have been complicit and have allowed the Israelis to continue their genocidal destruction of Gaza with impunity. Oxford City Council must stand up and speak out in support of Gaza and to demonstrate that you are committed to human rights and International Law - you must support this motion.

Response from Councillor Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working

Thank you for your important and moving address. As you will know we have a motion in front of us tonight. It builds on existing work and policies of this council which has long pursued ethical investment and procurement policies. There has been a lot of cross party working to find wording that we can all agree on, and I am hopeful for cross party support for the motion tonight.

I mentioned at the beginning of council that we had received a letter from the Mayor of our twin city Ramallah and that I responded today.

I think it might be helpful to quote from my response to the Mayor.

I thanked him for his letter which I said I read with deep sadness and concern

I said that the images of renewed destruction in Gaza are truly shocking and that we can only condemn Israel's resumption of its military action there.

I commented that it was essential that we see Israel's immediate return to the ceasefire agreement, and a resumption of its staged withdrawal from the territory, along with the release of hostages Hamas continues to hold.

During Ramadan, it is also more important than ever that food aid can resume, together with the other forms of humanitarian assistance and electricity – all desperately needed in Gaza.

I also said that I know our Prime Minister shares these concerns and is urging both Israel and Hamas to return urgently to talks to implement the ceasefire agreement in full and work towards peace. That should involve a credible plan to allow Palestinians in Gaza to return home and rebuild their lives, as envisaged in the Arab proposed recovery and reconstruction plan, and Hamas removed from power. There can be no attempt to forcibly annex land in Gaza.

I said that reports of the killing of Palestinian civilians in the West Bank, including children, are abhorrent and that violent settlers must be held to account, and the Israeli Defence Force must be fully accountable to the law.

Our greatest wish is that the attacks in both Gaza and the West Bank cease immediately, and that the citizens of Ramallah can celebrate Eid at the end of the month in a climate of renewed hope for an agreement settlement that can bring permanent peace and freedom.

Finally, I would also like to take this opportunity to offer our heartfelt congratulations to you and your OUH colleague Alessandra Morelli, a Senior Research Midwife, on your recent presentation of Humanitarian Medals at Buckingham Palace for in your case your work in Gaza and in her case her work in Libya post Storm Daniel.