

Motion on Pension Divestment

This branch notes that:

Many members of this branch are contributing to the South Yorkshire Pension Authority (SYPA) in order to save for their pensions in the future, or are already receiving pensions from SYPA.

South Yorkshire Pension Authority has a number of investments in companies that sell weapons to Israel including Airbus, BAE systems, Honeywell, Lockheed Martin, QinetiQ and Rolls Royce, all of which supply weapons or components for weapons that are used in Gaza to kill and injure many tens of thousands of defenceless Palestinians. Some of these companies also sell equipment that is used for surveillance and control of the Palestinian population such as at checkpoints, and other companies sell militarised equipment used for home, school and other infrastructure demolitions.

South Yorkshire Pension Authority also has investments in companies on the United Nations list of companies doing business in the illegal settlements, and also in Israeli companies and bonds that help to finance the occupation of the West Bank and war crimes in Gaza.

Israel has held Gaza under blockade since 2007. Since October 2023 Israel has killed 47,000 Palestinians, mostly civilians and cut off water, power, food and medical aid to Palestinians. Israel is now being investigated by the International Court of Justice for the possible crime of genocide. Amnesty International has produced a report called 'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman: Israel's Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza' December 2024, which clearly states that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza.

The International Court of Justice ruling of 19 July 2024 declared that Israel's occupation of the Gaza strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is unlawful, along with the associated settlement regime, annexation and use of natural resources. The Court said that Israel is violating the international prohibition on apartheid.

"States must immediately review all diplomatic, political, and economic ties with Israel, inclusive of business and finance, **pension funds**, academia and charities."
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/experts-hail-icj-declaration-illegality-israels-presence-occupied>

The ICJ called for an arms embargo, **an end to all other commercial activities that may damage the Palestinians**, and targeted sanctions against entities involved in illegal occupation, racial segregation and apartheid policies.

South Yorkshire Pension Authority is profiting from the violation of human rights and is taking reputational, financial and legal risks with pensioners money.

The pension funds of SYPA are invested in Border to Coast which is the pooled fund for 11 Local Authority Pension Schemes. Many of the investments in arms companies and companies complicit with Israeli genocides are with Border to Coast.

This branch believes:

That scheme members do not want their pensions invested in arms companies and any companies that violate human rights.

This branch resolves to:

- Write to South Yorkshire Pension Authority expressing their wish that the pension fund reviews its Responsible Investment Policy with a view to divesting from all companies that are complicit in Israeli genocide, occupation and apartheid.
- Write to Border to Coast Pensions Partnership, expressing their wish that the pension partnership reviews its Responsible Investment Policy with a view to divesting from all companies that are complicit in Israeli genocide, occupation and apartheid.
- Write to all 4 Local Councils in South Yorkshire, Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster expressing their wish that the council makes a clear policy statement that they want the South Yorkshire Pension Authority to divest from all companies that are complicit in Israeli genocide, occupation and apartheid.
- Support the pension divestment campaign - South Yorkshire Pension Divest for Palestine, by publicising their campaign and the associated petition to members and allowing their union banners to be used at protests.
- Sign the pledge of support for the Sheffield Coalition Against Israeli <https://sheffieldagainstisraeliapartheid.org.uk/who-we-are/>
- Join the Palestine Solidarity Campaign