



**For Attention:**

**Councillor Callton Young OBE  
Chair Croydon Council Pension Committee**

cc: Pension Committee members,  
Councillor Jason Cummings (Cabinet member for finance),  
Mayor Jason Perry.

31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Dear Councillor Callton Young,

**Ref: Divest Croydon LGPS from the Arms Trade**

We are a small community kitchen based in the borough of Croydon serving those in need in our local community. Times are hard. Every week the queues, starting nearly 2 hours before we open, get longer and longer. Half of our guests are homeless of which 14% are sleeping rough, 1 in 6 have not eaten for at least a whole day in the last month – just a few weeks ago a lady in her 70s collapsed in the queue because she hadn't eaten for two days. Our services are being decimated – libraries closed down, public assets being sold off, council taxes rising astronomically, and now disability cuts being announced which will directly impact 1 in 5 of our guests. We are deeply distressed to learn that during such hard times Croydon Council has seen fit to lend Israel half a million pounds<sup>[1]</sup>, through the purchase of Israel government Bonds, helping finance its genocide in Gaza. Why?

We are shocked that the council has also invested over £120 million<sup>[2]</sup>, through its Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) fund, in arms companies and those complicity in genocide and occupation of Palestine.

**Investment in Arms**

Council managed funds are invested in nearly 30 arms companies, these include:

**Elbit Systems** (£93,886) – Israel's largest private arms company, it has played a central role in the genocide in Gaza. It produces 85% of Israel's killer drone fleet responsible for the targeted slaughter of children in Gaza.

**BAE Systems** (£504,647) – UK's biggest arms manufacturer, produces 15% of the F-35 stealth fighter aircraft that has been used in bombing hospitals and schools in Gaza and Yemen.

**Lockheed Martin** (£1,206,590) – World's largest arms manufacturer. Produces F-16, F-35 fighter aircraft, used in war crimes around the world including Gaza and Yemen.

**Airbus** (£948,319) – Its Typhoon fighter jets have been implicated in Saudi war crimes in Yemen

**Boeing** (£1,381,522) – World's 2nd largest arms company. Its Apache attack helicopters are being used by Israel to commit genocide in Gaza.

**Raytheon** (£1,780,425) – Produces bombs and missiles that have been documented by Human Rights Watch as being used by Saudi Arabia in Yemen against civilian structures including food warehouses leading to famine. The International Criminal Court in The Hague has been asked to investigate senior arms company executives from BAE Systems, Airbus and Raytheon for responsibility for aiding and abetting Saudi war crimes in Yemen.

**Northrop Grumman** (£765,364) – Produces nuclear missile systems and stealth bombers, has strong partnerships with the Saudi military.

### **Human Cost**

- Oxfam reports that “Israel is using starvation as a weapon of war”.
- Save The Children witnessed “families eating leaves and scraps left by rats, in desperate attempt to stay alive”.
- Human Rights Watch states that “Children in Gaza have been dying from starvation-related complications since the Israeli government began using starvation as a weapon of war... Israel deliberately depriving Palestinians in Gaza of Water is a calculated policy that has led to the deaths of thousands from dehydration and disease that is nothing short of the crime against humanity of extermination, and an act of genocide.”
- UNRWA revealed that every day 10 children lose one or both legs with operations and amputations conducted with little or no anaesthesia due to Israel's blockade.
- In 15 months, Israel has killed 1 in every 50 people in Gaza.
- 92% of homes in Gaza have been destroyed or damaged, making 90% of the people who survive the ongoing genocide homeless.

The council can't afford to feed and house its own people or look after its disabled, but has money to invest in arms used to starve and disable children and destroy homes in Gaza. Why is Croydon council investing in death and suffering?

We are better than that. We urge you to take action to ensure council managed funds, including LGPS funds are divested from the arms trade and from companies complicit in genocide, apartheid and occupation of Palestine.

### **Legal Obligation**

In January last year, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the world court, handed down an interim ruling affirming there is plausible evidence Israel is committing genocidal acts against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. As a State Party to the Genocide Convention, the UK has a binding obligation to employ all means reasonably available to prevent and deter further genocidal acts.

Last July, the ICJ issued an advisory opinion ruling that Israel's military occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is unlawful and must end, and that Israel is in breach of the international

prohibition of the crime of apartheid. The court affirmed that all states are under an obligation not to render aid or assistance to this unlawful situation.

Stemming from these obligations, councils must avoid procuring from or investing in companies that facilitate Israel's breaches of international law. Many councils have already committed to end their financial ties with companies complicit in Israel's breaches of international law, Croydon council must join them.

### **Ethical Investment**

We are pleased to see that the Council has divested from Tobacco companies, but we need to do more. We in Croydon need investment in our own services to alleviate local suffering. Last year Croydon council only built 17 council homes, and the year before that only 12 (FOI/11376). The housing charity Shelter revealed that there are 5,700 homeless people in Croydon. We desperately need more affordable housing, why not invest in that?

Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire LGPS have invested £100 million in a fund from M&G aimed at financing affordable homes. Legal & General also have an affordable housing fund for LGPS's to invest in.

There are several ethical funds that avoid investing in companies that make their money from creating or selling weapons (Nest Ethical Fund for example). There is no excuse for Croydon council to continue investing in death and suffering.

We look forward to hearing from you about actions you have taken.

Yours sincerely

Abbas Ali

Resistance Kitchen  
www.ResistanceKitchen.uk

1. <https://lgpsdivest.org/lgps-investments/> Croydon Council investment in Israel Government Bonds £493,264

2. FOI/11588 - Croydon Council LGPS holdings in L&G FTSE World Ex-tobacco fund) cross referenced with CAAT and PSC databases for arms companies and those complicit in the occupation.