



5th December 2025

For Attention of:

- Mayor Jason Perry
- Elaine Jackson
Acting Chief Executive Croydon Council
- Jane West
Croydon Council Corporate Director
- Simon Trevaskis
Acting Head of Democratic Services
- Adrian May
Senior Democratic Services & Governance Officer
- Sam Chung
Democratic Services & Governance Officer
- Councillor Leila Ben-Hassel
Scrutiny & Overview Committee (Chair)

Ref: Council Suppression of Public Scrutiny over Investment in Elbit Systems

Dear Sir or Madam,

We are writing to register our profound concern at the repeated and deliberate suppression of legitimate public questions concerning Croydon Council's pension fund investments in Elbit Systems, a company repeatedly cited by international bodies for its role in war crimes and violations of international law.

Over the past year, Croydon Council has systematically censored or banned multiple questions submitted by members of the Croydon Divest Coalition, which includes Resistance Kitchen, preventing residents from raising evidence-based ethical issues about how public money is invested. This behaviour represents not only an abuse of democratic process but an affront to transparency, accountability, and free expression.

At the Full Council meeting of 16 April 2025, two questions were submitted.

Question One referenced evidence presented in Parliament by Professor Nizam Mamode, an NHS transplant surgeon, who described performing operations on children targeted by Israeli drones in Gaza.

The original question asked why the council's pension scheme invested in Elbit Systems, which manufactures 85% of Israel's drone fleet, and whether it would divest from arms manufacturers.

The council refused to accept any mention of Elbit Systems, falsely asserting that doing so would be defamatory - even after robust supporting evidence from Israeli and international sources was provided. Even a revised version - referring instead to "an Israeli company whose name I am not allowed to mention" - was refused, as was any mention of the censorship itself.

The final, council-approved version—stripped of names, context, and meaning—bore no resemblance to the original.

A second question, submitted by a Palestinian Croydon resident, was summarily banned with no chance to amend it. This question expressed the anguish of seeing her local council invest over £120 million - as revealed through Freedom of Information requests - in companies implicated in apartheid, occupation, and mass violence against her people. The council dismissed this question as "offensive" and "unsubstantiated," even though the evidence was drawn directly from council records.

For the upcoming council meeting on 10 December 2025, the following question was submitted:

Last week, investigations verified by multiple arms experts, including Amnesty International's crisis research lead, confirmed Israel's use of banned cluster munitions in Lebanon, with images showing remnants of M999 Barak-Eitan cluster shells made by Elbit Systems. Our country is a signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which prohibits their use, production and transfer. Why is Croydon council's pension fund investing in Elbit Systems, in breach of UN PRI and exposing the fund to serious ethical, legal and financial risk? Will the council immediately divest from Elbit and adopt an ESG policy excluding all producers of banned or indiscriminate weapons?

The question cited detailed findings by arms experts and Amnesty International, and verified by a Guardian investigation published on 19 November 2025:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/nov/19/israel-used-widely-banned-cluster-munitions-in-lebanon-photos-of-remnants-suggest>

This article contains photographic evidence of Israel's use of cluster munitions in Lebanon, including images of remnants clearly marked as Elbit Systems M999 Barak-Eitan cluster shells. The findings were verified by six independent armament experts. This level of corroboration more than satisfies the standard of due diligence required for inclusion in a public question.

Once again, mention of Elbit was prohibited. The council's "approved" version stripped the question of all substantive content, void of reference to Elbit, Israel, or even cluster munitions, it was a hollow statement stripped of truth:

Why is Croydon Council's pension fund investing in companies that are in breach of United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI) and exposing the fund to serious ethical, legal and financial risk? Will the Council immediately divest from these companies and adopt an ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) policy excluding all producers of banned or indiscriminate weapons?

This pattern of redaction and refusal cannot be justified. The Guardian article cited is clear, rigorously verified, and supported by independent experts. The United Nations Human Rights Council has already documented Elbit Systems' complicity in serious violations of international humanitarian law. Yet Croydon Council continues to silence any factual reference to this company while investing residents' pensions in it.

Such acts of censorship constitute political interference and mislead the public by concealing information that residents have a right to know. Preventing scrutiny of investments tied to war crimes is not neutrality—it is complicity.

We therefore demand that the original, uncensored question be reinstated for the next council meeting.

Residents have a right to raise ethical, legal and financial concerns relating to the handling of their pension funds without obstruction.

The democratic process must not be subjugated to the protection of corporate or political interests.

Accountability, transparency, and moral responsibility compel Croydon Council to allow open questioning of all public investments - without censorship, distortion, or fear.

Yours sincerely,

Abbas Ali

Resistance Kitchen

www.ResistanceKitchen.uk