

TO MEMBERS OF THE WOLVERHAMPTON PENSION COMMITTEE
18 March 2026

STOP INVESTING IN GENOCIDE

Our demand, supported by the leader of Birmingham City Council, Dudley and Sandwell Councils, and the Trade Unions, that West Midlands Pension Fund stop arming Israel by ceasing to invest in arms to Israel and trade with illegal Israeli settlements, remains as urgent as ever.

Current situation

On 28 February, under the cover of the chaos created by its war of aggression with the US on Iran, the Israeli authorities closed all crossings into the Gaza Strip, leading to the suspension of medical evacuations and raising concerns about food security and fuel supplies needed to sustain humanitarian operations. This after having barely opened the crossings since the so-called 'ceasefire' last October.

On 8 March, Reuters reported an Israeli airstrike and tank shelling killed six Palestinians, including two women and a girl, in separate attacks in Gaza City. Mohamed Abu Selmia, the head of the Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, said three men were killed in an airstrike near Al-Azhar University in western Gaza City - a paramedic Mohammad Hamduna, and two others named as Mohammad Abu Shedeq and Ahmed Lafi.

This brings a total of 591 Palestinians who have been killed, 1,591 injured, and 720 bodies retrieved from under the rubble, since the October 2025 'ceasefire' according to UNHCR. This is an extension of the genocide.

Meanwhile in the West Bank, Israel has continued to accelerate its attacks on Palestinians and land grabs, counting on Western governments to rally behind its offensive attacks across the region and to continue ignoring its regime of apartheid.

On the 8 March, the Guardian newspaper reported that Israeli settlers and soldiers killed three Palestinians in their village near Ramallah, the third deadly attack in a week of surging Israeli violence across the occupied West Bank. Israeli settlers shot dead five civilians during invasions of Palestinian olive groves, villages and grazing land, in the brief period since Israel and the US launched a new war on Iran at the end of February. A sixth person died after inhaling military-grade tear gas used by the Israeli army.

According to the [UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#), between 7 October 2023 and 28 February 2026, 1,058 Palestinians – at least 231 of them children – were killed in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Of these, 12 have been killed since the beginning of 2026.

Where are the structured reviews?

Since this Committee last met, neither you or Rachel Brothwood acting on your behalf, have been able to marshal any evidence that your statements and policy positions ‘to hold companies to account’ on their human rights record, that has had any impact whatsoever.

We have read your reply dated 22/12/2025 to the questions we submitted to the last Committee meeting, sent on your behalf by Rachel Brothwood.

You state that there have been ‘improvements’ (point 6) and refer to evidence in the Stewardship and LAPFF annual reports.

There is just one single reference in the stewardship annual report on what is referred to as ‘human rights and conflict-affected and high-risk areas’ referring to the case of **Lockheed Martin** on page 64, which states:

“The company acknowledged LAPFF’s request and provided a link to its human rights policy, demonstrating recognition of the issue.”

But goes on to say:

“However, the response lacked substantive detail on how the company identifies, manages, and mitigates human rights risks associated with the use of its products in conflict-affected areas.” The company has ignored LAPFF and no doubt will continue to do so without significant and intensive escalation.

WMPF Responsible Investment strategy states that, *“Where engagement outcomes remain inadequate and company practices remain fundamentally misaligned with our investment aims and beliefs, we will undertake a structured review and retain the option to escalate or ultimately exclude.”*

By any standards, Lockheed Martin’s response is inadequate, so where is the structured review, where is the evidence of escalation and how much longer are you prepared to wait?

In regard to the 2025 annual LAPFF report, whilst it talks about meetings and correspondence, nowhere does it provide any concrete evidence of reductions of misuse or actual decreases in breaches of human rights. It reports on communication with **Booking Holdings** but the company is still advertising property rental in illegal settlements in the West Bank at the time of writing as this example shows. Given that Booking Holdings has been on the UN data list for many years, where is the structured review and evidence of escalation? Instead, the only action taken in 2025 was to request ‘that Booking update its human rights statement’.

Indifference to the engagement approach in regard to Palestinian human rights is a common pattern. For example, as the officer's report to agenda item 5 noted **Chevron** did not provide clarity on whether it conducts formal conflict analysis beyond operational safety considerations.

It would be more than reasonable to expect that WMPFs 'escalation protocols' might be applied to Lockheed Martin, particularly given the lack of progress since officers reported on Lockheed Martin to the June 2024 Pension Committee (section 3.15) which claimed "*These engagements aimed to ensure that companies implement robust human rights due diligence practices and adhere to international standards to avoid reputational damage, erosion of public trust, and legal liabilities.*"

Where is the improvement?

WMPF's Responsible Investment also claims to consider "*the potential for adverse impacts on people.*" but sadly, all we are told is that:

"LAPFF will continue engaging with Lockheed Martin to seek greater transparency on its human rights due diligence in conflict zones, encourage alignment with international humanitarian law and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), and push for clearer disclosure of measures to prevent misuse of its products in high-risk areas."

By any standard, this is not an 'improvement'.

We remind committee members that the recent report to the UN Human Rights Council, stated that "*Lockheed Martin supplies the Israeli government with a wide variety of weapons, including fighter jets, attack helicopters, and missiles. Lockheed Martin technologies are also integrated into Israel's main weapon systems. Post-October 2023, F-35s and F-16s have been integral to equipping Israel with the unprecedented aerial power to drop an estimated 85,000 tons of bombs, much of it unguided, to kill and injure more than 179,411 Palestinians and obliterate Gaza.*"

Complicity with Israel's war crimes.

You state in your recent correspondence with us that you "*believe more systemic change can be achieved through engagement and collaboration, driving and championing more robust and best practice due diligence across sectors as well as individual companies*" but, as with the case of Lockheed Martin and the other 12 or so arms companies in the fund, you are unable to demonstrate this. Your engagement approach is a failure.

We don't believe you are taking this seriously and conclude that, not only are you not following your own 'engagement' policies, you seem to have no willingness to do so. Your inaction makes this committee complicit with Israel's war crimes.

Pledge for Palestine

Finally, we congratulate your colleagues on this Council, the West Midlands and over 1400 Councillors across the country who have signed the 'Pledge for Palestine'. Support for our call for divestment continues to grow. The use of Council Tax money used for the 'Employers Contributions' to West Midlands Pension Fund to part fund investment in genocide taking place against the Palestinians is a local issue. We shall be raising this in the forthcoming local elections in May and can only hope, in view of the evidence, you will agree to reconsider your approach.

We look forward to your reply,

Simon Cardy, Wolverhampton Palestine Solidarity Campaign

Clive Dixon, Chair, Coventry Palestine Solidarity Campaign

Naeem Malik, Chair, West Midlands Palestine Solidarity Campaign