

Item 3.8

2024 Sydney Peace Prize

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

Sydney prides itself as a city of peace. We are committed to universal human rights and justice, as are millions of people around the world.

But still, there are more than 120 armed conflicts globally.

For the past 26 years, the City of Sydney has partnered with the Sydney Peace Foundation to help create a peaceful, fair, just and compassionate world.

The Sydney Peace Foundation focuses on solutions that prove that peace with justice is possible, and inspires and empowers people everywhere to create that reality in their lives and communities.

The Foundation awards the Sydney Peace Prize, Australia's only international award for peace. Each year the Prize which reminds us of the urgent need to address conflict where we see it, and to think more deeply about the world and our values.

On Tuesday 18 June at Town Hall, I was proud to announce the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as the recipient of the 2024 Sydney Peace Prize.

In a year marking the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Geneva Conventions, and amid unprecedented challenges to International Humanitarian Law, the work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is as important as it has ever been.

The Prize is awarded for "saving lives and preventing the suffering of people affected by armed conflict, for its advocacy for peace, and for its commitment to International Humanitarian Law".

This independent and impartial humanitarian network of 16 million volunteers and staff is saving lives every day in more than 90 countries.

The Prize offers a special acknowledgement of the Palestinian Red Crescent movement.

The City condemns the attacks on civilians by Hamas and Israel. In this most recent heightening of conflict, 1,139 Israelis have been killed and over 200 hostages taken, over 36,000 Palestinians have been killed and over 85,000 Palestinians injured. We condemn war crimes by all parties and demand justice, peace and human rights for all.

In the crisis in Gaza, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement teams are working tirelessly, in shockingly difficult and dangerous circumstances, to save lives and reduce suffering.

Their personnel, ambulances and hospitals have come under bombardment despite being explicitly protected under the Geneva Conventions and International Humanitarian Law and 20 Palestinian Red Crescent Society volunteers have been killed on duty.

As neutral intermediaries, they stand up for all people and work to reunite families, including hostages; improve access to essential services like water and electricity; advocate for safe and sustained humanitarian access; and advocate for international humanitarian law for the protection of civilians, medical facilities and humanitarian personnel.

As Ben Saul, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism said at the Prize announcement:

“The Movement typically enjoys unparalleled trust, confidence and legitimacy among even the most bitter enemies because of its fundamental principles of independence, impartiality and neutrality, its confidential working methods, and its long and reliable track record in the field.”

This work is tragically in great need, and we are grateful for the contribution of these brave, unsung heroes.

I congratulate the Sydney Peace Foundation and its Jury – made up of representatives from business, media, public service, community services and academia – on awarding this year’s prize to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The Prize includes a \$50,000 donation to the recipient of which the City is providing \$25,000 towards as part of its Community Service Grant program. I propose the City donates an additional \$25,000 directly to the Australian Red Cross Society who is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement with funds directly assisting people in need in the region.

At a time when the international situation is truly alarming, it is inspiring to know there are courageous people doing extraordinary work for the global community. They remind us how precious it is to live in peace.

This donation complies with the City of Sydney’s Support for Charities Policy adopted by Council on 21 November 2022, is in line with previous donations and aligns with objective 7.3.2 (2) of the City’s Operational Plan 2023/24, which states that the City will support communities beyond our local area and international communities experiencing emergency situations.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) commend the Sydney Peace Foundation for its important work and its dedication to promoting peace and honouring the champions of social justice and human rights;
- (B) note and congratulate the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as recipients of the 2024 Sydney Peace Prize; and
- (C) approve a direct donation of \$25,000, to be sourced from the 2023/24 General Contingency Fund, to the Australian Red Cross Society.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor