

AN ORDINANCE related to travel and training done by the Seattle Police Department; prohibiting members of the Seattle Police Department from cooperating with 1) the military forces of any country, and 2) the police forces of any country with a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights including, but not limited to, Israel; and prohibiting the Seattle Police Department from using city funds for travel to any country with a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights including, but not limited to, Israel:

WHEREAS, as reaffirmed in Resolution 31928, Seattle is a Human Rights City that endorses the rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and

WHEREAS, as affirmed in Resolution 31858, Seattle is committed to protecting and promoting the human rights and dignity of Native peoples and all residents and visitors to Seattle, including the civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle has taken stances to resist injustice and oppression within and beyond Seattle's borders, including through the passage of Resolution 31928 which reaffirms Seattle as a welcoming city, condemns all forms of oppression throughout the world, and states that the Office of Intergovernmental Relations will continue to alert the Seattle City Council about international issues impacting Seattle and inform Councilmembers when City Council action could contribute meaningfully to a positive outcome; and

WHEREAS, according to Seattle Municipal Code 14.11.010, it is the Seattle City Council's intent to ensure protection of the human rights as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to all persons as they relate to biased policing activities and to require the policies, training, and data that safeguards against such activities in the City of Seattle; and

WHEREAS, after a Department of Justice investigation found in 2011 that the Seattle Police Department engages in an unconstitutional pattern of excessive force, Seattle entered into a Consent to Decree with the Department of Justice that requires the city to ensure that its policing services comply with the Constitution; and

WHEREAS, according to a research article by Jonathan Mummolo published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences entitled "Militarization fails to enhance police safety or reduce crime but may harm police reputation," increasing militarization and use of surveillance by the police has been demonstrated to disproportionately harm Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color; and

WHEREAS, as a part of the widely supported “Blueprint for Divestment and Community Reinvestment” created by Decriminalize Seattle and King County Equity Now, Black community organizations and their supporters have called for Seattle to eliminate the Seattle Police Department’s travel and training budget; and

WHEREAS, in response to Seattle Police Department’s well-documented use of excessive force and chemical weapons against thousands of protestors during the Black Lives Matter uprisings in response to the murder of George Floyd in the late Spring and Summer of 2020, the Seattle City Council took steps toward defunding the Seattle Police Department during the summer emergency budget vote; and

WHEREAS, following months of activism, advocacy, and organizing by community organizations allied under the Solidarity Budget coalition, the Seattle City Council passed in November 2020 a historic reduction of \$46,122,941 to the Seattle Police Department budget, including a reduction of \$175,000 to the travel and training budget; and

WHEREAS, federal and international laws including 22 U.S. Code § 2304 – Human rights and security assistance, United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution 1235 (XLII), prohibit any U.S. law enforcement from providing security assistance to any country the government of which engages in a “consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights,” including “torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, prolonged detention without charges and trial, causing the disappearance of persons by the abduction and clandestine detention of those persons, and other flagrant denial of the right to life, liberty, or the security of person;” and

WHEREAS, in its 2019 Report on Human Rights Practices in Israel, West Bank, and Gaza, the U.S. Department of State reported that Israel committed significant human rights violations including unlawful or arbitrary killings, arbitrary detention, restrictions on non-Israelis residing in Jerusalem including arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy, family, and home, and significant restrictions on freedom of movement; and

WHEREAS, in May 2021 Israel escalated the most recent wave of state violence against Palestinians, including expulsions of Palestinian families from their homes in the neighborhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan in East Jerusalem, an eleven day bombardment of houses, apartments and other civilian buildings by Israeli Armed Forces in Gaza, killing at least 248 people, including 66 children, and police brutality against Palestinians, including the mass detention of hundreds of Palestinian protestors; and

WHEREAS, according to Amnesty International the Israeli Armed Forces' ongoing abuses against Palestinians, including torture, imprisonment without charges or trial, land confiscation, unwarranted disruption of medical care, harassment at checkpoints, unwarranted civilian shootings, repression of protestors, and illegal evictions, are in clear violation of international laws including United Nations Resolutions and the Laws of War and Occupation as stated in the Fourth Geneva Convention; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Israel's B'Tselem, and former Israeli soldiers have cited the Israeli police and military forces a) for over-surveillance of the public, often based on racial profiling and regardless of innocence; b) for disproportionate responses to protests; c) for arbitrary and sustained detentions without due process; d) for the violence and other ill-treatment against detained African migrants and refugees and Palestinians including children; and e) for operating under a de-facto shoot-to-kill policy when dealing with Palestinians suspected of terrorism regardless of whether they pose an immediate threat, among other human rights violations; and

WHEREAS, in a 2010 report titled "Separate and Unequal," Human Rights Watch noted that the outcome of policing by Israel in occupied Palestinian territories has not been to improve the well-being of, or to promote the public safety of, the policed community, but to maintain a racially segregated society in which one group is made inferior via the denial of rights and dignity; and

WHEREAS, in 2021 B'Tselem and Human Rights Watch reported that Israel is an "apartheid regime" and is committing the "crime of apartheid;" and

WHEREAS, local police forces across the United States have participated in what have been advertised as opportunities to receive "intensive counter-terrorism training" from "experts" in the Israeli Defense Forces, intelligence and security services, and Israeli Police, for instance, organized by a range of governmental and non-governmental entities, including the Jewish Institute on National Security of America and the Anti-Defamation League; and

WHEREAS, in November 2017 the Seattle City Council passed SLI 206-1-B-1-2018, which produced two reports on the Seattle Police Department's training; and

WHEREAS, according to information from these reports as well as records obtained from public disclosure requests, at least seven members of the Seattle Police Department have traveled to Israel on training trips since 2013, including to attend the

Anti-Defamation League’s National Counterterrorism Training and participate in Educational Security Trips; and

WHEREAS, in addition to these trainings, two Seattle police officers traveled to Israel in 2015 as “Executive Protection,” accompanying former Mayor Ed Murray and costing city taxpayers \$22,162.41; and

WHEREAS, according to the SLI reports, the aforementioned training trips costed at least \$38,209.26 in taxpayer funds and funds obtained via forfeiture, totaling to a sum of at least \$60,371.67 spent on city-funded police trips to Israel, and

WHEREAS, according to the “Travel/Training Summary” document included in the SLI reports and previously mentioned public disclosure requests, between January 1, 2013 and October 4, 2019 Israel was the second-most visited destination of Seattle Police Department trips to foreign countries—at seven total trips—behind Canada at 28 trips; and

WHEREAS, between September 5 and 13 of 2015, Carmen Best, the former Chief of the Seattle Police Department, attended a weeklong National Counter-Terrorism Seminar in Israel, where she stated in a participant booklet that she desired to “observe homeland security tactics, training and protection in ways that I likely would not learn stateside;” and

WHEREAS, although these joint trainings are often framed as opportunities for US law enforcement to learn policing strategies from a closely aligned democracy with counter-terror experience, exchanges with the Israeli military, police, and intelligence agencies reinforce American law enforcement practices of surveillance, racial profiling, and suppressing the right to protest through the use of force; and

WHEREAS, as documented in articles by numerous news publications and in a comprehensive report by the organization Researching the American-Israeli Alliance titled “Deadly Exchange: The Dangerous Consequences of American Law Enforcement Trainings in Israel,” other police departments that have participated in these Israeli police and military trainings have been noted to share the negative qualities seen in Israeli policing, wrongly validating their use of abusive, racist, or otherwise unjust methods against civilians; and

WHEREAS, these consequences include: the New York Police Department, whose “Demographics Unit” mirrored the discriminatory over-surveillance of Muslims seen in

Israel; the St. Louis city and county police forces, whose tactics in Ferguson, MO, prompted Palestinians to offer advice on minimizing the harmful effects of tear gas to Black Lives Matter protesters there; the Atlanta Police Department, which, according to the news site Guardian Liberty Voice, built a Video Integration Center modeled after the command and control center in the Old City of Jerusalem, mimicking Israeli methods to surveil an entire community; and

WHEREAS, The City of Seattle wishes to promote an encompassing vision for public safety that moves towards the abandonment of militarization and instead embraces other markers of wellness, such as providing its people with access to resources including affordable housing, health services, and public transportation.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS

Section 1. The City of Seattle unequivocally prohibits the Seattle Police Department from participating in, using any of its budget, or accepting any material or financial resources—direct or in kind—from any private or public entities, to enter into or continue any training programs, cooperation, exchanges, or partnerships that involve or include: 1) The military forces of any country; and 2) The police forces, intelligence agencies, security services, or other armed forces of any country with a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights including, but not limited to, Israel.

Section 2. Seattle shall prohibit the Seattle Police Department from using any city funds, its travel and training budget, or other resources to send police department personnel—as mayoral protection or for any other purpose—to any country with a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights including, but not limited to, Israel.