

**Green party**

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# Leeds Green party councillor says sorry for comments about Gaza conflict

Mothin Ali has not been suspended from city council despite outcry over remarks



• The Leeds Jewish Representative Council has asked the Green party to suspend Mothin Ali. Photograph: Twitter/X

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A [Green party](#) councillor at the centre of an antisemitism row has apologised “for the upset caused” by his remarks but hit back at “Islamophobic” attacks against him.

The Green party has launched an investigation into Mothin Ali, who was elected to [Leeds](#) city council last week, but has declined to suspend him.

Ali, who is a prominent YouTube and TikTok personality, has come under fire for remarks he has made in social media videos in recent months and during his acceptance speech last week.

In his speech on being elected, recorded on his TikTok channel, Ali stood in front of a Palestinian flag and said “Allahu Akbar” and “this is a win for the people of Gaza”.

On the day of Hamas’s 7 October attack on Israel, Ali said in remarks on social media that Palestinians had the right to “fight back”.

In a separate video published on social media, he criticised a rabbi who went into hiding after receiving online threats because he had served with the Israel Defence Forces. Ali called Rabbi Zecharia Deutsch a “creep”.

In a statement published by the Green party branch in Leeds after the remarks sparked backlash, Ali said he was “sorry for any upset my comments caused about the Gaza conflict. That was not my intention”.

“Like many across the world I have been deeply impacted by the dreadful conflict currently underway in Gaza. The international court of justice said this conflict meets the case for plausible genocide,” he added.

“I do not support violence on either side: violence leads to more violence and this is what I have tried to convey,” he added. “I have consistently called for an immediate ceasefire and a release of all hostages. I hope to be working with a broad coalition including both the Jewish and Muslim Greens soon to discuss sensible ways for us to work on communicating our shared passion of bringing the conflict to an end.”

Ali hit back at criticism of his use of the words “Allahu Akbar” in his acceptance speech in the Leeds city council elections last week, suggesting the attacks were Islamophobic.

“It is not unusual for somebody of my faith to use the words ‘Allahu Akbar’ as an expression of gratitude and celebration. Some have sought to misrepresent this and it suggests **Islamophobia** to me,” Ali said.

The Jewish Labour Movement (JLM), an affiliate of the Labour party, wrote to the Greens on Tuesday warning that they were allowing “those with a history of spreading antisemitic views and positions to join and represent your party”.

JLM questioned why Ali was allowed to stand after his remarks about Rabbi Zecharia Deutsch.

Simon Myerson KC, the chair of the Leeds Jewish Representative Council, has published a letter he has written to Green party co-leaders Carla Denyer and Adrian Ramsay, calling for Ali to be suspended.

The Green party said it was investigating the context of Ali’s remarks and declined to comment.

It came as Sian Berry, a former co-leader of the Green party, announced she was standing down from the London assembly just three days after she was elected.

Berry’s decision to exit the assembly makes way for Zoë Garbett, who was the Green party’s unsuccessful candidate in the London mayoral contest, to take her place.

The move sparked criticism from Labour figures who said Berry should not have stood for the London assembly if she was going to immediately relinquish the seat.

Berry is the Greens’ parliamentary candidate in Brighton Pavilion, the seat currently held by the party’s only MP, Caroline Lucas, who is standing down at the next election. She has come under fire from Labour for standing in London and Brighton simultaneously.

Berry said: “Zoë has shown how much of a difference she will make in city hall, listening to Londoners and bringing their voices into the political debate. That’s why she needs to be in this job as soon as possible.”

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