

Minute on Conflict in Gaza

Eugene Friends Meeting, December 2023

Quakers are led by Divine guidance to cherish peace, and to testify against all wars and the use of violence to pursue political ends.

Since the founding of the first Quaker school in Ramallah in 1869, Quakers have witnessed the demise of the Ottoman empire; the short-lived British Mandate for Palestine; the parallel rise of the Zionist movement and Palestinian nationalism; the war which accompanied Israel's declaration of independence and the *Nabka*, or expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from their ancestral lands; the wars between Israel and its neighbors which followed in 1956, 1967, and 1973; and also to nonviolent and violent Palestinian resistance to the occupation in the first and second *intifadas*.

Today we are living through the latest cycle of this tragic history. It was initiated by the horrific attack of Hamas fighters from Gaza on neighboring Israeli communities and kibbutzim on October 7, and followed by the massive and ongoing Israeli retaliatory military action throughout Gaza.

We hold as a truth that every Israeli and every Palestinian is a victim of this ongoing conflict and has within them a divine essence, an Inner Light, and are all affected by this tragedy. We mourn their loss and suffering, and we call on Palestinian and Israeli leaders and their foreign enablers, including the US government, to recognize that essential humanity in the lives on the other side, to recognize the justice behind their territorial and national claims, and to envision and work for a world in which they can live either together or side by side in peace.

We call on:

- The United States government to end unconditional military and diplomatic aid to any partisan in this fight. The US should use its leverage through diplomacy and aid to help the partisans achieve a lasting peace in which all Israelis and Palestinians achieve and exercise their national aspirations.
- The Israeli government to cease all offensive military operations in Gaza and the West Bank; to release all Palestinians being held without charges; to work with its neighbors to design and implement a viable governing structure for a peaceful and prosperous Gaza; and to champion the full civil and human rights of all Palestinians.
- Palestinian leadership in Gaza and the West Bank to cease support for ongoing hostilities; to release all Israeli and international hostages; and to work in earnest with Israel and its neighbors to negotiate and implement governing structures that assure the full rights, dignity, and equality of all Palestinians and Israelis living in historic Palestine/Israel.