

STATEMENT ON THE ISRAEL/PALESTINE/GAZA CONFLICT from the Albuquerque Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quaker)

Minute of Unity, approved January 7, 2024 in Meeting for Worship for Business

(2024.1.1) Albuquerque Friends, are led by the Spirit of divine compassion to cherish peace, and to “utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fighting with outward weapons for any end or under any pretense whatever.” *Declaration of Friends to Charles II, 1660*

We believe that every Israeli and every Palestinian is a victim of the antecedents and ongoing conflict in Palestine/Israel/Gaza, with legitimate national and territorial claims that cannot be resolved by violence. We ask that the United States and other countries work for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in this conflict. Without a ceasefire, casualties from the fighting and bombing will continue to escalate, hostages held by Hamas will be even more endangered, and civilian deaths from lack of shelter, food, clean water and medical care will continue to increase.

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 parties achieve a lasting peace in which all Israelis and Palestinians achieve and exercise their national aspirations,**
- **The U.S. Senate to approve Sen. Bernie Sanders’ resolution invoking Section 502B(c) of Foreign Assistance Act demanding a full accounting of the human rights record of Israel’s actions in Gaza before releasing any more military aid,**
- **The U.S. House of Representatives to adopt H.R. 786, calling for an immediate de-escalation and cease-fire in Israel and occupied Palestine,**
- **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.**
- **The United States Congress to adopt the amendment to the supplemental appropriations bill to require that any military appropriation to another country be conditioned on compliance with International Humanitarian Law and the Law of Armed Conflict, as proposed by Senator Van Hollen of Maryland and already supported by NM Senators Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Lujan.**

Background/Rationale

- **Since the founding of the first Quaker school in Ramallah in 1869, Friends have shared in the troubled and violent history of the region called Palestine.**

- With both the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the “British Mandate for Palestine;” both the Zionist movement and Palestinian nationalism arose within the same land. We recognize that these movements arose in response to both the pogroms and genocide against Jewish people in Europe and the colonial occupation of Palestine and the Levant by Britain and other European colonial powers.
- Friends have watched in grief and stood in witness the as “seeds of war” long nurtured in this troubled land have borne tragic fruit. Israel’s declaration of independence was accompanied by the *Nakba*, or expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from their ancestral lands. Recurring wars between Israel and its neighbors followed. Both nonviolent and violent Palestinian resistance to the occupation of their homeland led to the first and second *intifadas*. The increasingly repressive occupation has given rise to both Palestinian resistance and settler impunity.
- Today we are living through the latest cycle of this tragic history. The brutal attack of Hamas fighters from Gaza on neighboring Israeli communities and kibbutzim on October 7 has led to the massive and ongoing Israeli retaliatory military action throughout Gaza, increased violence against Palestinian communities in the West Bank, and violence by state and non-state parties throughout the region. Israel’s wholesale bombing of civilian areas in Gaza has led to a death rate unprecedented in modern regional conflicts.
- All affected by this conflict, including Palestinian and Israeli leaders and their foreign allies and enablers, including the US government, must recognize the essential humanity of the lives on all sides and work for a world in which they can live either together or side by side in peace.