

Red Cedar Friends Meeting (Quaker), Lansing, Michigan

Minute on the Israel-Hamas War and the Situation in Gaza

December 10, 2023

We are saddened by both the Hamas attack on civilians in Israel and the ensuing Israeli retaliation. We are horrified by the extreme and growing toll in lives and life-supporting infrastructure that continues to be suffered by civilians trapped in Gaza without access to adequate food, water, and medical care or the means to seek safety from bombing attacks. Witnessing the devastation is causing an alarming rise in hatred and violence toward both Jewish and Muslim people in our own country.

We urgently call on all who can influence this situation to seek an immediate permanent ceasefire between Israel and Hamas with the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian detainees. We urge that all diplomatic, financial, and material resources be devoted to peace rather than war.

Ensuring safety and humanitarian aid for civilians in Gaza is of paramount importance, as is ensuring the safety of humanitarian workers in Gaza and the West Bank. In the longer term, an international effort to rebuild civilian infrastructure in Gaza will be required.

The Quaker belief that there is "that of God" in all people leads us to believe that Palestinians and Israelis have a right to life, to peace and security, and to an opportunity to build a productive future. We acknowledge the complexity of the painful history that has led to the seemingly intractable situation in the region and to the current armed conflict. It is painful to know that U.S. military and financial support is sustaining Israel's campaign in Gaza, and we are ashamed that US weapons have been used to kill civilians there.

Beyond the immediate goals of ending the war and providing relief to civilians in Gaza, we call on the international community to recognize that a lasting peaceful resolution of this conflict is imperative despite the difficulty of achieving it. We call on all factions and all who have influence in the region to work toward a solution that will enable both Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace and with self-determination under international law.