

**Minute on the Middle East
Twin Cities Friends Meeting
Approved 1-13-2024**

Twin Cities Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) calls for an immediate cease-fire in the Middle East, an end to the United States providing weapons of war, and swift action to ensure urgently needed humanitarian assistance.

We have witnessed violence and terror caused by Hamas' attacks killing over 1200 Israelis and the inhumane treatment of civilians, including taking hostages with 150 still held. Since October 7, 2023 and at the time of this writing, the Israeli response has claimed the lives of more than 23,469 Palestinians, 40% of them children. Another 10,000 Palestinians are estimated to be buried under rubble. Over 1.9 million people have been displaced from their homes, and over 60% of homes in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. The United Nations warns that half of the population of Gaza is at risk of starvation.

More armed conflict and weapons won't bring peace. In the face of growing violence, lawmakers must:

- Publicly call for a ceasefire, de-escalation, and respect for international law.
- Protect lives, including hostages, all civilians and members of the military.
- Stop providing military aid in the Middle East.
- Greatly expand funding and access for humanitarian aid, including rebuilding Palestinian infrastructure.
- Address the root causes underlying this explosion of violence.

- Evaluate human rights abuses which are under review by the United Nations.

Quakers have a long history of testimony against all war. We recognize that the seeds of war are sown long before military conflict begins, and that peace requires justice. To that end, we urge the creation of an independent Palestinian state.