

Morningside (NY) Monthly Meeting Minute on the Conflict between Israel and Gaza

Morningside Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) calls for a ceasefire now in Gaza and a free flow of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.

We grieve the deaths, beginning on October 7, 2023, of approximately 1,200 Israelis and (as of this writing) an estimated 18,400 Palestinians in Gaza, an estimated 226 Palestinians in the West Bank and 104 deaths of Israeli soldiers so far. Each death pierces the hearts of family and friends and the loss of each person is a tear in the fabric of community. This grief makes it harder to see the other as a Child of God.

As Friends, we are committed to our Peace Testimony, not only because, given that we are asked to honor the Inner Light within each person, we feel it is wrong to humiliate, hurt or kill, but also because acts of violence create a cycle of continuing and escalating violence. It is important, therefore to examine the causes of violence and work to eliminate them.

In this spirit, we ask that the United States and other countries work for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in this conflict. Without a ceasefire, not only will casualties from the fighting and bombing continue to escalate, endangering those who have been captured by Hamas, but civilian deaths from lack of shelter, food, clean water and medical care will escalate as well.

We also ask that President Biden and the U.S. Congress withhold further military aid to Israel, aid that is in violation of the Leahy laws, which states that the United States is prohibited from providing security assistance to any unit that is credibly accused of having committed a gross violation of human rights. Of the many casualties that have been inflicted by Israel's bombing of the Gaza strip, more than 50% have been women and children. Supplies of food, water and fuel have been extremely limited or blocked entirely. Many civilian institutions, such as schools, hospitals, mosques, and a church, have been bombed. These actions constitute violations of human rights.

Finally, we ask that there be a focus by the international community not only on providing immediate humanitarian aid to Gaza, but also, over the long term, on ensuring the civil and political rights of the Palestinian community, so that the cycle of violence can be stopped.

Approved on December 17, 2023 by Morningside Monthly Meeting