

## Minute of Concern

As members of the Quaker community in Newtown, Pennsylvania, we are a part of 375 years of testimony and action against all war and violence. We reaffirm the application of the peace testimony to the conflict in Israel and Gaza:

*We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretense whatsoever; this is our testimony to the whole world."*

*George Fox and others, to Charles II of England, 1660*

We recognize that though familiar to Friends, the peace testimony may sound radical to some. It denies the cycle of violence and trauma we see in conflict after conflict. It denies the still common practice of justifying violence as a restitution, a prerequisite for peace, or a means for maintaining security.

We are horrified by the atrocities committed by Hamas, the massively destructive retaliation by Israel's military, and the ensuing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. As is true of all war, the devastating effects of this conflict will impact generations to come. Closer to home, we are dismayed at the effect the conflict has had on our friendships and interactions with neighbors. Still, we have hope. We are grateful to all who are working to find an alternative way forward, attempting to mediate and build a lasting peace.

We ask that you consider your role in transforming the conflict from its current destructive cycle of violence into a sustainable process of nonviolent struggle for justice, security, and the flourishing for all parties. Contacting your legislators may sway their opinion towards encouraging peaceful conflict resolution and diplomacy. Organizing or joining peace-focused groups in your community could be productive, as shared focus can lead to clarity, which then can lead to action, as way opens.

Newtown Friends Meeting  
March 3, 2024