

Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends Minute on the Ongoing Devastation in Palestine

Approved February 24, 2024

Quakers believe in the sacred worth of each person and testify against all wars, terrorism, imperialism, hostage taking, and unjust imprisonment. We recognize active peacemaking requires interrupting antisemitism and Islamophobia wherever we see it, and we pledge to show up in solidarity alongside our Jewish, Muslim, and Arab neighbors.

As people who live in the United States of America, we feel it is necessary to speak up and take action on this matter because our tax dollars continue to support this decades-long violence, settler and military occupation, and displacement, and the people we put in power with our votes are making these decisions on our behalf. In solidarity with ally groups such as Jewish Voice for Peace and If Not Now, we say not in our name and never again.

When the International Court of Justice (ICJ) found it plausible in January that the Israeli government's acts could amount to genocide, we continued to grieve for those who had lost their lives, and we held out hope for the protection of citizens in Gaza enduring apocalyptic humanitarian conditions, destruction, mass killing, wounding, and irreparable trauma.

The ruling issued by the ICJ ordered six provisional measures including for the Israeli government to refrain from acts under the Genocide convention, prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to genocide, and take immediate and effective measures to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza. The Court also ordered the Israeli government to preserve evidence of genocide and to submit a report to the Court, within one month, of all measures taken in line with its order.

Since that ruling was issued, the Israeli government, with US military and financial support, has:

- continued killing hundreds of Palestinians each day and has injured thousands more;
- attacked hospitals and ambulances and killed dozens of healthcare workers;
- blocked aid, attacked a United Nations aid convoy, and shelled a shelter belonging to Doctors Without Borders (MSF);
- increased military operations in the West Bank and continued airstrikes on sites in Lebanon and Syria; and
- proposed a ground invasion of Rafah.

In the Gaza strip, as of February 23, 2024:

- 38,066 Palestinians have been killed, and 71,220 are injured, and tens of thousands more are missing;
- 2 million Palestinians have been displaced;
- 99,600 homes have been destroyed, while 241,400 have been partially destroyed;
- 406 schools, 613 mosques, and 3 churches have been damaged;
- and 3,120 Palestinians have been detained or disappeared.

We condemn the Israeli government's intensification of its siege of Gaza, blocking access to water, food, fuel, electricity, and medicine in an act of collective punishment. Hundreds of thousands of civilians are at grave risk of starvation and deadly disease.

We condemn the US government's veto of an immediate humanitarian ceasefire as well as the ongoing aid to assist the Israeli government's military actions in Gaza.

We call on the US government to end its military aid of the Israeli government and to fully restore UNRWA funding to aid Palestinians. The US government must stop sending the Israeli military more weapons.

We call on the Israeli government to grant access and safety to United Nations and humanitarian agencies to fulfill their duties. We need immediate humanitarian access for Gaza and adherence to international humanitarian and human rights law.

We agree on the following:

- There must be an end to indiscriminate fire.
- A comprehensive arms embargo is needed.
- The Israeli government must end its occupation of Palestinian territory and its blockade of Gaza.
- Elected Palestinian leaders now held as political prisoners must be freed.
- Palestine must be recognized as a nation state.

We suggest the following actions for Friends and allies:

- Find a protest or demonstration near you and show up.
- Call and/or write to your congressional representatives, senators, and the president. You could use and share a form letter such as this one from Jewish Voice for Peace: <https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/resource/call-congress-support-ceasefire/>
- Support ceasefire statements from whatever organizations or groups you're already part of.
- Find a way to participate in boycotts, divestment, and sanctions. More information is available at bdsmovement.net.

- Write a letter to the editor.
- Donate to an organization that is already in Gaza doing work there, such as Doctors without Borders and UNRWA.
- Join with the FCNL (Friends Committee on National Legislation) in their ceasefire efforts.
- Quakers have long participated in arrestable actions and civil disobedience such as stopping weapons transport. Get involved.
- Think creatively about something you can try (no matter how small it might seem) and try it!

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The following links are provided after the above minute was approved by the SCYMF business meeting on 2/24/24.

Individuals and meetings are encouraged to refer to the following suggested additional resources for education about the history and context of the modern State of Israel and region of Palestine that members of Equity & Inclusion find useful:

Websites:

- <http://decolonizepalestine.com/>
- <http://visualizingpalestine.org/>
- <https://electronicintifada.net/>
- <http://mondoweiss.net/>
- From the UN, about the Nakba (forced displacement of Palestinians in 1948): <https://www.un.org/unispal/about-the-nakba/#:~:text=The%20Nakba%2C%20which%20means%20%E2%80%9Ccatastrophe,ethnic%20and%20multi%2Dcultural%20society.>
- BDS website: <https://bdsmovement.net/Act-Now-Against-These-Companies-Profiting-From-Genocide>
- Council on American-Islamic Relations website about Islamophobia: <https://islamophobia.org/>
- Jewish Voice for Peace on antisemitism: <https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/2023/11/09/antisemitism-dangerous/>
- A toolkit for countering Christian Zionism: <https://www.fosna.org/counter-cufi-toolkit>
- Article about Christian Zionism: <https://convergencemag.com/articles/christian-zionism-christian-nationalism-and-the-threat-to-democracy/>

- Confronting Christian Islamophobia: <https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/confronting-christian-islamophobia>
- Challenging Christian hegemony: <https://christianhegemony.org/articles>
- AFSC article about companies that profit from the attacks on Gaza: <https://afsc.org/companies-2023-attack-gaza>

#### Book Recommendations:

- *The Hundred Years War on Palestine* (2020), Rashid Khalidi
- *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006), Ilan Pappé
- *The Palestine Laboratory* (2023), Antony Lowenstein
- *Unfortunately it was Paradise* (2003), Mahmoud Darwish (poetry)
- *Decolonizing Palestine* by Mitri Raheb
- *Ten Myths About Israel* by Ilan Pappé.
- *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* (2007) by Jimmy Carter. This book is not about the current history but does go into why a two-state solution hasn't yet been figured out, because Israel continues to violate agreements, steal land, and occupy Palestinian territories.

#### On social media follow:

- Rev Isaac Munther (@muntherisaac on Twitter, @munther\_isaac on Instagram) for a Palestinian Christian pastor perspective.
- B'Tselem (@btselem on Instagram) is a Jewish human rights organization that shares a lot about what is going on in Gaza and the West Bank.