

Salem Friends Meeting Minute on War with Iran and All Wars

At present, there are more armed conflicts and conflict-related fatalities around the globe than humanity has suffered since World War II. The war with Iran and Lebanon, initiated by the U.S. and Israel, has cost many lives and much economic harm. A fragile ceasefire and a “framework” to end hostilities now exists, but a real end to this war is unclear. Resolutions in Congress on the War Powers Act have come close to passage, but have so far failed.

On June 7, 2026 a group of us from Salem Friends Meeting had a second hour discussion on the war with Iran, a discussion which quickly expanded to where we are as Quakers on war in general. Attendees raised three quotations, which helped shape our discussion:

“War is not healthy for children and other living things.” Artist Lorraine Schneider

“We seek a world free of war and the threat of war.” Quaker Peace Testimony, Friend Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)

“War is not the answer.” Popularized by Martin Luther King in his *Beyond Vietnam* speech, 1967

We recognize that the Iran war is a symptom and not an isolated challenge. Our enormous military budget enables us to do wasteful and terrible things, making us all less safe rather than safer. This budget bleeds our resources and education, health care, and other social needs suffer. Science has shown us that the environmental impact of war is severe, if not irreversible. Although we gathered to discuss the Iran/Lebanon war, we referenced the numerous conflicts now (e.g. Ukraine, Gaza/West Bank, and Sudan) and the conflicts threatened (e.g. Cuba, Greenland, and Canada.) The U.S. is either overtly involved or providing arms for all of these.

We recognize as Quakers that there is the light of the divine in all of us and no one person is disposable. The lives of the Iranian schoolgirls killed by our bombs matter, as do the lives of U.S. soldiers.

So, what can we as Quakers do beyond composing a minute to address the immediate conflict in Iran and Lebanon?

- Advocate with courage and conviction for a shift in resource priorities from the military industrial complex to human and planetary needs.
- Speak out in opposition to ALL wars; there is no good or justifiable war.
- “Wage non-violence” – ask ourselves what we can do before wars start to advocate for peace.
- Most modern wars are driven by oil and capital – how do we challenge these priorities?
- Recognize that it is a system we are resisting, not one particular leader.
- Support conscientious objectors who are trying to live their commitment to peace.
- It can be hard to recognize the light of the divine in all, but our peace witness requires it and underpins everything we do.