

Abington Monthly Meeting Peace Minute 10/14/24

For 340 years the members of Abington Monthly Meeting in Jenkintown, PA have upheld the Friends/Quaker Peace Testimony that guides us to be peacemakers in times of war. In response to the recent widening of armed conflict in the Middle East, we affirm the call for the immediate cessation of violence.

October marks the one year anniversary of the brutal surprise attack on Israelis civilians by a Hamas invasion that resulted in 1200 people killed and 254 taken hostage. The subsequent retaliation by Israel, aimed at Hamas, has led to unrelenting bombardment of Palestinian residents in Gaza. At this point, 42,000 Palestinians have been killed and more than 100,000 injured. Seventy percent of the buildings in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. In response to rocket attacks by Hezbollah, Israel has begun bombing southern Lebanon and sending in ground troops. Iran has also recently launched missiles at Israel. Instead of reaching a peace agreement in the last year that so many hoped for, the war continues to widen and threatens to pull in direct involvement of American military forces.

Recent U. S. policies in the Middle East have been an abject moral failure. They have failed to provide a peaceful resolution that recognizes the right of all people to safety and basic human rights. Furnishing armaments without restrictions to the leaders of Israel has given them no incentive to pursue peace. Therefore, we are urging our government to take the following actions:

- To call for an immediate ceasefire among all parties in the war

- To redouble efforts for the safe return of the remaining Israeli hostages held in Gaza

- To cease providing military weapons and assistance to all countries in the Middle East

- To increase diplomatic efforts to de-escalate Middle East conflict

- To support the UN resolution demanding that Israel withdraw from the Palestinian territories (Gaza and the West Bank) within a year

- To resume funding of the UNRWA and other humanitarian aid groups in Gaza

We are holding all people in the Middle East in the light and offer our support for nonviolent resolutions to their differences.