

New Orleans Friends Meeting, Minute July 25, 2024

The Friends (Quaker) Meeting of New Orleans Louisiana calls for:

1. An immediate and permanent ceasefire between Israel and Palestine
2. Aid to be let into the Gaza Strip and administered by humanitarian organizations
3. A United States sanctioned arms embargo against Israel and all other terror groups
4. The withdrawal of US troops, weapons, and security from Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank
5. The United States to cease using taxpayer money to fund the State of Israel
6. Mitigation to end suffering and create peace
7. The release of all political prisoners
8. The condemnation of Antisemitism and Islamophobia

The colonization of Palestine has been ongoing for over one hundred years, driven by colonial powers, which seek control by dehumanizing and exploiting differences such as race, religion, ability, gender, etc. In the past nine months of the genocide, Israel has killed more than 39,000 Palestinians and damaged over 75% of Gaza's infrastructure.

The Friends Meeting of New Orleans recognizes that the occupation of Palestine and genocide in Gaza is not an isolated issue, and that its impact is tied to the City of New Orleans; from shipments leaving our port, to Palestinian residents being killed and arrested by the Israeli military. We recognize that global imperialist systems create unsustainable homogeneity and isolate individuals by creating fear of differences, conditioned by communication. War and violence are reflections of the failure of policy, communication, and shared human values. The opposite of war is not peace, it is creation, abundance, and safety.

As Quakers, members of the Religious Society of Friends, it is our fundamental belief that there is light, or goodness, or that of God in everyone. Quakers are guided by our Peace Testimony, and the belief that nonviolent confrontation and mitigation of conflict can lead to reconciliation, and recognition of humanness in one another. The commitment to this peace testimony does not only take the form of passive resistance, as we condemn all war and uses of violence. The incentive for Israel to end the occupation must be economic, and accomplished through direct action. The Friends Meeting of New Orleans aspires to increase our direct impact communally and individually. Specifically, members have encouraged the boycott of Israeli products, war-tax resistance, and becoming more involved with and intentionally supporting local and national organizations.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) was commissioned by the United Nations in 1948 to lead humanitarian work in Palestine after thousands of Palestinian refugees were forcibly displaced from their homes during the creation of the state of Israel. AFSC has maintained staff in the region ever since, who help facilitate peacebuilding dialogues, operate youth programs for Palestinian teenagers and young adults, and offer aid when necessary. In the past nine months of the genocide in Gaza, the AFSC has been able to distribute aid to over 500,000 people in Gaza.

The Friends Meeting of New Orleans joins other Quaker Meetings and Faith Communities in demanding an immediate and permanent end to the war in Palestine. See Addendum.

Addendum:

South Central Yearly Meeting Gaza Cease-fire Minute – March 2024: South Central Yearly Meeting stands for long-term peace and justice in the Middle East. We oppose all war. We oppose all forms of discrimination, including based on religion and ethnicity. We believe that lasting peace requires the honoring of the human rights of all people, including equality and self-determination. We hold the leadership of Hamas, the government of Israel, and the US government responsible to the same high standards of international humanitarian law and call for de-escalation, humanitarian access in Gaza, and a ceasefire throughout the region.