

Minute/Statement on the Middle East conflict

From the Burlington Friends Meeting, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Approved January 12, 2025

Members and attenders of the Burlington Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) deeply mourn the loss of all lives, livelihoods, homes, hospitals, schools, cultural histories and we hold out hope for self-determination and healing for the people who are victims of the escalating violence and war in the Middle East. As Quakers, we believe that all life is sacred, and that there is that of the divine in each person.

We acknowledge the historic violence, and condemn attacks and inhumane treatment of civilians by all parties involved in the ongoing Israel/Palestine catastrophe. We wish to support and amplify calls for an immediate and permanent end to the violence in the form of a durable cease fire; an immediate release of all hostages, detainees and political prisoners; provision for safe passage of humanitarian aid; and the creation of a just peace for all concerned.

With the Middle East conflict continuing to escalate, we urge the U.S. government and allies to use all of their leverage to end the violence, physical displacement, destruction of infrastructure, and enable access to humanitarian aid.

In response to the current situation, the United States must:

- Recognize the value and equality of all people.
- Insist that Israel and Hamas accept a ceasefire in which all Israeli and foreign hostages in Gaza, and the many thousands of incarcerated and captured Palestinians in Israel, are released and exchanged.
- Strongly call on all warring parties to cease hostilities between them and make every effort to protect innocent civilians.
- Immediately stop providing offensive weapons, weapons systems and military training to all warring parties.
- Insist that Israel has a responsibility to ensure adequate access to food, medical care, and education, and allow all needed humanitarian aid to enter and be distributed to the people in Gaza and in other war-affected areas.