Shepherdstown Friends Meeting
Minute on the Israel Palestine War

As members of the Quaker community in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, we are spiritual heirs to 375 years of testimony and action against all war and violence. We reaffirm the Quaker Peace Testimony of 1660 which states: “We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fighting with outward weapons, for any end and under any pretense whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world.”

We are aggrieved by the attacks on Israel by Hamas and the retaliation by Israel against the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. As shown by the long and complex history of this conflict, war will not bring peace or justice but only more violence.

Quakers believe in the sacred worth of all individuals. This belief underlies our Peace Testimony and leads us to acts of compassion and support for anyone who is suffering. Quakers continue to be present in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, undertaking courageous acts of peace. As Gunnar Jahn, Chairman of the Nobel Committee, said in 1947 when awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to British and American Quakers:

> *“The Quakers have shown us that it is possible to translate into action what lies deep in the hearts of many: compassion for others and the desire to help them – that rich expression of the sympathy between all men, regardless of nationality or race, which, transformed into deeds, must form the basis for lasting peace.”*

Therefore, we urge the United States government to:

- Push for a permanent ceasefire and the release of all hostages and prisoners of war. Stop the killing now.
- Terminate military aid to Israel when used in violation of the international rules of war, which Israel does by targeting civilians and basic infrastructure -- hospitals, houses, schools, water, electricity, and food delivery. Such gross violations of human rights only serve to break down the trust and mutual understanding that is needed for lasting peace and justice.
- Increase funding for humanitarian assistance and for rebuilding safe and just communities.
- Support locally-led peacebuilding efforts to end the inequities and injustice of occupied territories and to act in ways that will bring long term justice and peace. These efforts must logically include Israel, Gaza, the West Bank, displaced Palestinians, and the neighboring countries.

Adopted by the Shepherdstown Friends Meeting, WV, Jan 14, 2024.

https://shepherdstownfriends.org/where-we-stand