



Portland Friends Meeting

Statement of Portland Friends Meeting regarding War in Gaza

Approved by Portland Friends Meeting, March 3, 2024

As Quakers we believe that there is that of the Divine in each and every person and therefore every life is precious. We are horrified by the violence and loss of life in Israel and Palestine. We feel the killing and inhumane treatment of civilians is abhorrent, whether perpetrated by the government of Israel, Hamas or other forces in the area. We recognize that we are complicit in the perpetuation of violence and abuse through the actions and policies of our government.

This crisis that began in 1948 when 700,00 Palestinians were displaced to make room for the state of Israel is complicated, but all people need a safe place to live where they can access food, shelter, healthcare, work, and education. We believe the violence we are witnessing today is sowing seeds for future conflict. Only with a ceasefire can we start to address the root causes of this and future conflicts.

This war has escalated violence in neighboring Middle East countries, disrupting lives of more innocent civilians. International laws have been broken. Here at home, we stand against the surge of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in our local communities and throughout the United States.

We urge the US government and our representatives in Congress:

- To call for a permanent ceasefire;
- To fully support delivery of humanitarian aid in the area;
- To negotiate the release of all the Israeli and Palestinian hostages;
- To work diplomatically to address de-escalation in the region; and
- To stop supporting the Israeli military with funding and with weapons manufactured in the U.S.

In response to this horrific situation, Portland Friends Meeting made the following decision on March 3, 2024:

Portland Friends Meeting found unity to make a donation of \$75,000 from our Shared Witness Fund to the American Friends Service Committee to support humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza and the West Bank. While our priority is to address urgent human needs, we trust AFSC will use these funds wisely to confront the full challenges of the situation.

In conjunction with this donation, we acknowledge that our work is not done, and we remain complicit in violence through the actions of our government. We challenge ourselves and each other to reach deeply and contribute what we can to address humanitarian needs, and to use our gifts of every sort for the expression of Love in the face of horror, which may involve actions that confront the policies and funding that perpetrate violence.