



# Churches consideration on Palestine

Dear area meeting clerks

Last year Christians in Palestine wrote a statement sharing the lived experiences of Palestinians, and called for solidarity and action from churches around the world: ['Kairos Palestine II: A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time of Genocide'](#).

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) has reviewed the statement and now asks area meetings to consider how they will respond to the requests that are made in it; and then to send your meetings' minutes to QPSWCC to help us form a position as a Yearly Meeting. As said in the subcommittee minute to QPSWCC:

*"This document [Kairos Palestine II] represents the voice of Palestinian Christians at what they see as a decisive moment in their history – a moment which calls for a new stand. In it they describe their reality as Christians in the Holy Land as one of genocide, colonisation, and ethnic cleansing. From this reality, which threatens the very existence of Christian communities across the West Bank and Gaza, they call on Christians across the world to stand with them in solidarity. This is a very strong document which calls on us to go beyond our comfort zone and consider what 'costly solidarity' means in practice (see paras 3.10 and 3.11).*

In considering this you may find it helpful to remind yourselves about the existing work and positions of Britain Yearly Meeting on Palestine and Israel. These are set here: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/action/palestine-and-israel/quaker-engagement-with-israel-and-palestine>). Since 2002 we have run the UK and Ireland Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) on behalf of churches in Britain and Ireland. This was in response to an earlier call from the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem. In 2011 we took a national position to boycott products from the Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and in 2018 to divest from companies profiting from the occupation. In 2024, Meeting for Sufferings accepted that 'apartheid' is an accurate description of the situation in occupied Palestine, and Yearly Meeting in 2025 discerned our belief that the Israeli government was committing genocide in Gaza. The full text of relevant minutes is attached as an appendix to this letter. [We were pleased to see](#) on 8 September 2026 that the UK government adopted some of the positions and actions we had been calling for.

We recognise there is much in the Kairos call where we do not yet have discernment. It may be challenging to many. As a peace church, we are especially conscious of the complexities and sensitivities these conversations can raise, including their impact on relationships within communities in the UK. (Some of these concerns are referred to within the document, at 3.8, but also for example at 1.5.) Working for a just peace calls us to

navigate these tensions with care and understanding. Yet our commitment to peacebuilding does not mean shying away from difficult and even painful conversations. Rather, it means engaging with them with humility and compassion, and listening carefully to different perspectives and experiences as we seek to discern a way forward together.

We therefore ask Friends to engage with this Kairos call, and to share their own discernment with us so that we can consider a way forward as a Yearly Meeting. We hope that clerks will be able give this the time it requires, that Friends will come with hearts and minds prepared, and that they feel able to speak from the Spirit. Please send your minutes on this to QPSWCC, via their secretary Oliver Robertson ([qpsw@quaker.org.uk](mailto:qpsw@quaker.org.uk)).

We ask Friends: What does this moment call us to do? What does love require of us?

We share the closing words of the Kairos call:

*"From the heart of pain, genocide and displacement, we raise this cry, a prophetic cry of steadfastness. We declare our commitment to work for the good of this land and of all humanity on the basis of our shared humanity until the day we live free in our land together with all the inhabitants of the land in true peace and reconciliation founded on justice and equality for all God's creation, where mercy and truth meet, and righteousness and peace kiss each other (Psalm 85:10)."*

We continue to hold in the Light all those working for a just peace for Palestinians and Israelis.

In friendship

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, fluid loop followed by a horizontal stroke.

Jonathan Lingham Clerk, QPSWCC

September 2026

## Appendix 1: Further information and reading

To support you in your discernment:

- Consider using some of our Quaker processes for reflecting on contentious issues: business meetings, [threshing meetings](#), [worship sharing](#).
- Pax Christi International, the Catholic peace movement, has produced a study guide on the Kairos II Declaration, with questions to answer and ideas for engagement. [https://paxchristi.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Kairos-II-and-PCI\\_May2026.pdf](https://paxchristi.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Kairos-II-and-PCI_May2026.pdf)
- For more details about the context in Palestine and Israel, consider the eyewitness blogs by ecumenical companions (<https://www.eyewitnessblogs.com/>), read BYM resources on Palestine and Israel (<https://www.quaker.org.uk/action/palestine-and-israel/get-involved>) or invite an EA to speak to your meeting.
- The [Time to Act campaign](#) was launched in June 2026 by various churches including Quakers in Britain. It is inspired by the Kairos call.
- The publication [\*Challenging antisemitism: Reflections for Quakers on recognising and responding to anti-Jewish prejudice\*](#) may help Friends consider antisemitism and the language they use around this issue.

## Appendix 2: The Kairos II Declaration

### Kairos Palestine – The Palestinian Christian Initiative

#### A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time of Genocide

*We look toward the day when we shall live free in our land, together with all the inhabitants of the earth, in true peace and reconciliation – founded upon justice and equality for all God's creation, where "mercy and truth meet, and righteousness and peace kiss each other." (Psalm 85:10)*

14-11-2025

#### Introduction

##### §1

We, the Palestinian Christian Ecumenical Initiative, issued the *Kairos Palestine Document* in 2009 – "A word of faith, hope, and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering." The Heads of Churches in Jerusalem heard this cry, welcomed it, and offered their support. Likewise, the document resonated widely, both locally and internationally. Then, as now, we gathered – women and men, clergy and laity – from across the different church families in Palestine. After prayer and reflection on the suffering of our people under occupation, we released that cry of hope in the absence of hope, affirming our faith in God and our love for our homeland, convinced that our struggle is ultimately about human life and dignity.

##### §2

We live now in a time of genocide, ethnic cleansing and forced displacement unfolding before the eyes of the world. This moment demands from us a new stand, one unlike any before it. It is both a decisive moment and a moment of truth. Today, we renew our stand for truth and our commitment to fundamental religious, theological and moral principles. We look at our reality and take a renewed stand, responding to the voice of the Holy Spirit deep within us, listening to the call of faith in this time of genocide. We renew our message of faith, hope, and love – offering a faith-inspired vision for the time after genocide.

#### Part I – The Reality: Genocide, Colonization, and Ethnic Cleansing

##### 1.1

We raise this cry from the heart of the assault on Gaza – a war that has left behind hundreds of thousands of martyrs and wounded, and nearly two million displaced people. Many were buried beneath the rubble, burned alive, tortured to death in prisons or forcibly displaced more than once. Others endured starvation, targeted even as they ran in search of food. Tens of thousands of children were killed in the most horrific ways. Gaza's health, education, economic, and environmental sectors – indeed, every component of life – have been destroyed. It will take years to recover from the devastation and catastrophe that have befallen us as a people.

## 1.2

Human rights organizations, legal institutions, and international experts, have been unequivocal: the statements of Israeli political leaders and Israel's actions in its assault on Gaza constitute **genocide**. Many of the war crimes and crimes against humanity have been documented and arrest warrants have been issued against Israeli political leaders based upon rulings of the International Court of Justice.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.3

They do not want us to remain on our land but are destined for displacement, death, or submission. The genocidal war on Gaza is the **continuation of the Zionist project** to seize all of Palestine, emptied of its Palestinian people. Ethnic cleansing and the denial of the right of return to those forcibly displaced are ongoing policies practiced in Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza, and the territories of 1948. The Nakba of our people is our daily reality. This genocide has been carried out by Israel after decades of **apartheid**<sup>2</sup>, **settler colonialism**, political repression and the deliberate policy of killing any possibility of a political solution – including the two-state solution. Exposed today is the true face of Zionist ideology: a system that over decades has entrenched an organized and sophisticated regime of apartheid, supported by advanced technologies, exercising total control over every aspect of Palestinian life – fragmenting the land, dividing its people, and turning Palestinian existence into an unbearable hell. Israel's so-called Nation-State Law enacted in 2018 embodies Zionist racism and arrogant Jewish supremacy in Palestine, making apartheid a lived reality. Israel's decision to annex the West Bank has further exposed the true intent of this colonial project.

## 1.4

While the peoples of the world have stood in solidarity with us, the genocidal war has laid bare the hypocrisy of the Western world, its hollow values and the civilization it boasts, claiming commitment to human rights and international law. In truth, the Western world has sacrificed us, revealing racism and double standards toward our people. Of course, we distinguish between the architects of these destructive policies and the many leaders, organizations, and popular movements that have shown sincere solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, demanding an end to injustice and bloodshed and the full recognition of our legitimate rights.

## 1.5

This war has also exposed another reality of **Zionism – whether Jewish or Christian** – in its justification of violence and killing. We Palestinian Christians are deeply shocked by the positions of many churches that either adopted the colonizer's narrative or remain silent in the face of the genocide of our people. At times, they prioritize Jewish-Christian interfaith dialogue over truth, human dignity and life itself, ignoring the context. They judge one side

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/israel-has-committed-genocide-gaza-strip-un-commission-finds](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/israel-has-committed-genocide-gaza-strip-un-commission-finds)

<sup>2</sup> [www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/19/world-court-findings-israeli-apartheid-wake-call](https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/19/world-court-findings-israeli-apartheid-wake-call)

and excuse the other – or simply remain silent. Some even go so far as to take positions complicit in, supportive of, or calling for genocide.

## 1.6

Israel commits these crimes while invoking the events of **October 7, 2023**, claiming that its actions are an act of self-defense – forgetting that the Hamas attack of that day was itself born out of decades of injustice, oppression and displacement since the Nakba of 1948, and more than sixteen years of an immoral, suffocating blockade on Gaza. To refer to this context – and to the right of a people under occupation to resist their occupier and oppressor – is to acknowledge that the events of October 7 occurred in a particular context. Mentioning the context does not justify the killing or capture of civilians, the violations of international law and norms, or war crimes. At the same time, the claim of “self-defense” cannot stand. How can a colonizer defend itself against those it has colonized and expelled from their land? International law – if it still retains any moral weight – refutes this claim.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.7

**Settler colonialism**, past and present, is built upon genocide, ethnic cleansing and the forced displacement of indigenous peoples – all for the sake of exploiting land, resources and wealth to serve the colonizer’s gain. We see deep economic dimensions behind Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza – particularly its interest in the natural gas fields off the Palestinian coast. Control over Gaza also means control over one of the world’s most vital trade routes and energy supply corridors, enabling vast economic and commercial projects that entrench colonial economic dominance at the expense of the Palestinian people. The world’s silence toward the genocide in Gaza is not innocent. It is tied to massive economic interests that value profit above human life and rights.

## 1.8

**In Jerusalem**, clear settler-colonial policies of a religious and demographic nature seek to Judaize the city at the expense of its pluralism. There are continuous assaults on Muslim and Christian holy sites, attempts to burn churches, desecrate and destroy cemeteries, and the writing of racist graffiti slogans upon them. Attacks on Christian clergy are increasing, as are restrictions on Christian religious celebrations such as the Holy Fire Saturday and Palm Sunday. Financial coercion, through the imposition of taxes and the freezing of church bank accounts – in violation of the “status quo” – has also intensified. The Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem have described these acts as part of a systematic policy to empty the Holy Land of its Christians.

## 1.9

Across the **occupied West Bank** – from north to south – Palestinian towns, villages, and Bedouin communities face relentless assaults by settlers and settlements. They wreak havoc upon the land, destroy crops, poison or seize water resources and attack residents – all under the protection, support, and even participation of the Israeli army in acts of violence, killing, home demolitions and forced displacement. Palestinian society lives

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<sup>3</sup> <https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/37/43>

under a suffocating siege imposed by checkpoints, gates, and every mechanism that denies our people freedom of movement.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.10

For **Palestinians within the state of Israel**, blatant racism and discrimination persist. Palestinian communities face intimidation, criminalization of free expression, and persecution of any effort to defend Palestinian rights, along with deliberate neglect of rampant organized crime in Palestinian towns. Those displaced within Israel in 1948, whose lands were confiscated, are still denied the right to return to their villages and rebuild their homes. Bedouin communities remain victims of systematic displacement and ethnic cleansing, especially in the Naqab (Negev).

### 1.11

In recent years, Israel — supported by the United States and other major powers — has constantly attacked the core principles and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. It has sought to erase **the refugee question** by attempting to destroy the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), accusing it of terrorism and pressuring donor countries to cut its funding. At the same time, several refugee camps in the West Bank have been systematically destroyed, displacing thousands of people once again.

### 1.12

**Palestinian civil society organizations** working in the field of human rights have come under fierce assault aimed at discrediting them, undermining their work, and even eliminating them through accusations of terrorism and through political pressure on governments to halt their funding and prosecute them.

### 1.13

Since October 7, 2023, Israel has dramatically expanded its **policy of abduction and imprisonment**. Today thousands of Palestinians — male and female alike — are being held in Israeli prisons; roughly one-third are detained without charge or trial under administrative detention. Among them are many children. Numerous deaths have been recorded in prisons since the war began. Human rights organizations have documented systematic practices of torture, sexual violence, starvation policies and the denial of medical care. Prisoners, especially those from Gaza, are subjected to mass detention and complete isolation from the outside world under Israeli military law — resulting in large numbers of enforced disappearances, loss of legal representation and total absence of communication.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/west-bank-movement-and-access-update-may-2025>

<sup>5</sup> [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/un-report-palestinian-detainees-held-arbitrarily-and-secretly-subjected](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/un-report-palestinian-detainees-held-arbitrarily-and-secretly-subjected)

**1.14**

**The internal Palestinian situation** is in urgent need of reorganization. Political division, rivalry and exclusion have deepened. The majority of Palestinians have lost confidence in their political leadership. As a result of the Oslo Accords and their aftermath, the Palestinian Authority has been trapped in serving the interests of the occupier — managing the daily life of the occupied on behalf of the Israeli occupier, unable to protect its own people from the terror of settlers and the Israeli security apparatus.

**1.15**

Signs of disorder have begun to spread **within Palestinian society** and have become part of our reality, largely due to the absence or weak enforcement of the rule of law. This has led to a rise in intimidation, land encroachment, tribalism, favoritism and corruption in its various forms at the expense of the common good, deepening people's frustration and despair. Amid the vast destruction and genocide in Gaza, acts of violence, revenge, chaos and theft have only added to the suffering of the Palestinian people.

**1.16**

**Daily life for Palestinians under military occupation** has become consumed by internal concerns: checkpoints, travel restrictions at borders and crossings, the payment of public-sector salaries and many other pressing issues. Significant as they are, these remain symptoms of the larger reality which must remain the central focus of our attention: the system of political and military domination imposed by Israel as an occupying entity over the Palestinian people.

**1.17**

Our society and political culture suffer from the absence of leadership renewal and vision through democratic elections as well as the exclusion of young leaders. Palestine today faces a grave phenomenon of brain drain, including skilled professionals and the young. This is not voluntary emigration. This is forced displacement, born of oppression and the complete lack of opportunity. We affirm, as Palestinians of all faiths, that we are the indigenous people of this land and that our very existence today faces an unprecedented threat. The continuous **emigration** of Christians does not stop, constituting a real danger to the Christian presence in Palestine which is now at risk of ethnic cleansing and extinction.

**1.18**

Christians in Palestine and in the diaspora are an inseparable part of the Palestinian people. Their challenges are the challenges of the nation as a whole. **The reality of the Church** is directly affected by everything that happens on the ground. The Church continues to work tirelessly — through pastoral care and institutional ministries — to support its sons, daughters, and the broader society in facing these pressures. The Heads of Churches work together to confront repeated assaults, issuing statements and taking courageous positions, despite the pressures and intimidation they face, in the hope that the world and the global Church will listen. At the same time, some Palestinian Christians feel a growing need for greater closeness between clergy and laity, and for a stronger role for the leadership of the Church in rejecting occupation and its symbols, elevating local theology and giving it broader expression in church pulpits and public stances.

### 1.19

In recent years, our region — **the Middle East** — has undergone major political and regional transformations shaped by a deliberate plan to impose Israeli military dominance over the entire area with the support of Western powers, drawing a new political and demographic map in our region. Israel, backed systematically by its allies, has attacked many countries of the region, violating their sovereignty and that of their peoples, flouting international law, and entrenching itself as an aggressive, bullying state above all laws and conventions — pushing the region and indeed the world to the brink of catastrophe.

### 1.20

As a result of these external interventions and struggles for dominance, **extremist and terrorist religious groups** have emerged — groups we condemn, along with those who have supported, financed and/or armed them. These movements have entrenched sectarianism at the expense of citizenship. Many “minorities” including Middle Eastern Christians — especially in Syria and Iraq — have paid a painful price for this extremism. In solidarity and prayer, we stand beside them and all victims of sectarian and religious terrorism.

### 1.21

At the same time, **normalization agreements** have been marketed as peace agreements between Israel and some Arab states under the name “Abraham Accords”. This naming itself represents the manipulation of religion to serve political, economic and normalization agendas — ignoring the essence of the issue and the priority of achieving a just peace with the Palestinians themselves. These accords have instead normalized occupation and apartheid in Palestine, rendering them acceptable, normal realities. A new phenomenon has also emerged: “Zionist Islam,” a recent movement among certain Arabs and Muslims who, for religious, economic or geopolitical reasons, support Zionism and regard Israel as a potential ally.

### 1.22

In light of all this, we must call things by their proper names: Israel is a **colonial, settler and exclusionary entity** built upon the displacement of the indigenous population and their replacement with new settlers. For this reason, we reject the very concept of “conflict.” The reality on the ground is rather tyranny and an oppressive regime of settler colonialism and apartheid. Any denial of this reality is an evasion of manifest truth — one that reinforces and perpetuates the injustice.

### 1.23

We are now living in a new era — an age in which “might makes right” and peace is imposed through military power in defiance of **international law** and the rulings of legitimate international courts. We reaffirm our commitment to the respect and authority of international law, which guarantees human rights and global peace among nations and peoples. This moment in human history demands a faith-based stance — one that speaks truth to power and tyranny without compromise or evasion. This goes beyond any particular Palestinian dimension; it is, truly, *a moment of truth*.

## Part II – A Moment of Truth for Us

### 2.1

In the face of this harsh reality and at this decisive moment we raise this cry — first to ourselves, to the sons and daughters of our churches and congregations, and to our entire people in the homeland and the diaspora. It is a cry of steadfastness, a renewed stand for truth, and a call to hear the voice of God within us and to us. This is a time for solidarity and mutual support — a time to take clear and courageous positions built upon principles of faith and national belonging. This is the moment of truth. We affirm that what has been built upon falsehood and historical injustice can never yield peace or sustainability. **True solutions begin with dismantling oppressive, racist systems. Only then can we speak of a new horizon that we dream of and long for — one in which we remain in our land together with all who dwell in it on the basis of justice, equality and equal rights, free of supremacy and domination.**

### 2.2

We call for a **comprehensive national re-evaluation** of our reality — to draw lessons and insights from it — leading to a unified, collective vision and a clear strategy for future action, grounded on the independence of Palestinian decision-making. This must include a critical review of all proposed solutions and their feasibility within a legitimate representative framework that ensures independence of decision-making and the right to self-determination. We warn against giving our national struggle a religious character or turning it into a religious issue that pits religions against one another.

### 2.3

This is a time for **resistance embodied in costly steadfastness on our land** in the face of every attempt at displacement, annexation and genocide, a resistance lived out in our unity, cooperation and commitment to our faith, national principles and all our rights. To hold on to faith and hope is resistance. To pray is resistance. To safeguard the holy places is resistance. To preserve social peace is resistance.

### 2.4

At a time when Palestinian resistance and global solidarity movements are criminalized, we reaffirm the right of all colonized peoples to resist their colonizers. As we stated in our first document, we remain committed to the principle of *creative resistance* — a firm and costly stand against ongoing injustice. We see **creative resistance embodied in the popular Palestinian movements confronting occupation, settlement expansion, settler terrorism and apartheid as well as in the work of civil society organizations, legal and human rights initiatives, cultural, theological and diplomatic engagement, and in student and labor movements. In all these and more, we recognize effective means of resistance grounded in love — a love that can bring about change and renew hope.**

### 2.5

We value the **global movements of resistance, advocacy and popular pressure** that work to hold governments and international bodies accountable — isolating Israel through boycotts and sanctions until it complies with international law. We view this from a moral perspective. The strategies of boycotts, divestment and sanctions are, in our view,

effective forms of creative resistance rooted in the logic of love and nonviolence as affirmed in our original document.

## 2.6

In the face of the ecocide perpetrated by Israel in Gaza and the repeated assaults and environmental destruction in the West Bank that threaten future generations, we renew our belonging to this land and our rootedness in it. We affirm the **sanctity of life and the duty to care for creation**. Our calling is to live in mutual coexistence with creation — a shared faith and moral responsibility embraced by individuals and institutions, public, governmental, social, and religious alike.

## 2.7

We emphasize the urgent need to protect all those who are **vulnerable in society: the victims of occupation and colonization; people with disabilities**, especially those who have lost limbs; the brokenhearted, the grieving; and all who are marginalized for any reason including victims of domestic or social violence, economic exploitation and gender-based abuse.

## 2.8

Among the faces of steadfastness and hope in our society stands the **Palestinian woman** — grandmother, mother, sister, and daughter — the unbending backbone, partner in the struggle, holding together home, land, memory and future all at once. Her presence is foundational to society as a whole and her contributions are manifold in national, social, economic and spiritual life. The Palestinian woman cannot be reduced to the category of “women and children”, faceless victims stripped of agency and will. Her voice, creativity and leadership are indispensable forces. There can be no true liberation without her full participation at every level of decision-making and nation-building.

## 2.9

Our message to ourselves as **Palestinian Christians** is this: *We feel the weight of history upon our shoulders and we are determined to preserve the Christian witness in this Holy Land. To all Palestinians, we say: The preservation of the Christian presence is both a national cause and priority. We are neither simply a number nor merely a type of diversity within our society. We are indigenous citizens who embody human values and seek to work and build our homeland alongside all our partners in it.*

## 2.10

In addressing ourselves, we say: **We are the sons and daughters of the first Church** — descendants of the apostles and the saints of the first Christian centuries — those who cultivated this land, built its cities and villages and drank from its waters. We do not live on the margins of this land. We are woven into its fabric. We carry its history and heritage. Its very soil knows us as its own. Many empires have passed over this land and disappeared, buried in the dust of history, yet the bells of our churches continue to ring — bearing witness to the truth and proclaiming resurrection every day.

## 2.11

This is what we say **to our young men and women**: *You are the living Church; you are the treasure of hope. The future is born from your steadfastness and your faith. We believe in*

you. We see your anger, your sorrow, your fear. We also see your strength. We know that our story has not ended, that our injustice persists. We do not call you to naïve optimism, but to hope that is rooted in action. Hope is not surrender. Hope is a living act of resistance — steadfastly refusing the reality of death imposed upon us, confronting and resisting every form of injustice and occupation. Jesus Christ walked with the poor and the weak, stood beside the oppressed, and never abandoned love or compromised truth and justice. For the sake of the salvation of humanity, he accepted the cross. His resurrection was victory over death and injustice, a sign of hope rooted in faith. This is the hope that sustains us today.

## 2.12

And we say to you also: ***You are not alone. There are those who stand with you in Palestine and around the world.*** Even if silence prevails now, the day will come when your voices will be heard. Your voices matter. **Express yourselves. Write. Sing. Create. Organize. Resist through your humanity in a world that seeks to strip it from you.** Dare to love, to dream, and to shape a free and radiant future. We salute your initiatives and your activities — in the church, in national and civic engagement, in scouting, youth, sports, culture, art, politics and human rights — all marked by openness to society, by the spirit of volunteerism, and by faith and hope free of sectarianism. We draw inspiration from your steadfastness and your love, and we see in you the promise of a better future.

## 2.13

**To our people in the diaspora**, those who were forcibly displaced: *You may be geographically far from Palestine, but Palestine lives within you.* We call upon you to engage in communities, movements and coalitions that aim to strengthen our steadfastness and affirm our presence. You play an essential role. Your voice has the power to shift realities. We value your activism. We have heard your voices. Indeed, the whole world has heard them. Share our suffering and our stories of steadfastness and success. Create spaces for dialogue and for building bridges between us and the religious and political leaders in the countries of your diaspora. Act with wisdom, and present to the world the true image of our people. In you also lies the hope of a better future. We will not lose our dream of reunification, nor will we abandon our right of return.

## 2.14

We extend **our support to our spiritual leaders and church institutions** that continue to bear their Christian witness even in the darkest and most difficult times, strengthening the steadfastness of their sons and daughters.<sup>6</sup> We especially commend the tremendous work of the churches of Gaza who have sheltered the displaced. We value the courage of our church leaders who have stood with our people in Gaza and supported their steadfastness amid genocide and displacement. **The faithful in Gaza** have written heroic stories of steadfastness and witness. Some have been martyred. Many have been wounded and bereaved. Our prayers and hearts are with them. We call upon Christians

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<sup>6</sup> [www.fides.org/en/news/69796-](http://www.fides.org/en/news/69796-)

[ASIA PALESTINE Christian institutions third largest employer among the Palestinian population according to a survey people](http://www.fides.org/en/news/69796-)

around the world to stand with us in our effort – contrary to what appearances may suggest – to preserve the Christian presence in Gaza, which dates back to the earliest centuries of Christianity, and to advocate for the right of all who were displaced to return to their homes and rebuild their lives.

## 2.15

**We are witnesses to the Resurrection** and to the empty tomb from which the light of life burst forth. We believe that the final word belongs not to death, but to life. Not to darkness, but to light. Not to injustice, but to truth. We proclaim with the Apostle Paul: “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.” (2 Corinthians 4:8–9)

## Part III – A Call to Repentance and Action

### 3.1

We address **our appeal to Christians around the world**. We address this call from Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth – from the birthplace of Christ, the land of the Incarnation of the Word, and the cradle of love, mercy, and justice, from the land of suffering, death, and resurrection – the land of redemption and hope – from where humanity’s call to repentance and a return to the foundations of faith has come. From here the faith spread to the ends of the earth.<sup>7</sup> It is a call to *“learn to do good; seek justice; rescue the oppressed”* (Isaiah 1:17).

### 3.2

The **God revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures in both Old and New Testaments** – the Creator of the Universe and of all humanity – is the One who was incarnate in the Son, Jesus Christ, the God of all peoples (Acts 10:34–35; Romans 10:12–13). God, the Creator and Father of all, stands in solidarity with and takes the side of the oppressed and the downtrodden, the victims of all forms of injustice and tyranny from every nation regardless of race, religion or nationality (Luke 4:18–19). The mission of the Church is thus made manifest in joining the work of God’s Kingdom through the pursuit of peace, the defense of the oppressed, and the doing of good.

### 3.3

Genocide is a cumulative process – one that began in the minds of the settler-colonial powers of Europe when they denied the image of God in others and legitimized death, domination and slavery. We consider **the State of Israel, established in 1948, to be a continuation of that same colonial enterprise built on racism and the ideology of ethnic or religious superiority**. This project settled Palestine and worked to displace the indigenous people of Palestine from the time of the Nakba until today. Our present

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<sup>7</sup> [www.change.org/p/an-open-letter-from-palestinian-christians-to-western-church-leaders-and-theologians](http://www.change.org/p/an-open-letter-from-palestinian-christians-to-western-church-leaders-and-theologians)

Palestinian reality is the inevitable outcome of Zionist ideology and the supremacist settler-colonial movement, itself a product of the imperial mindset.

### 3.4

Genocide is a structural sin against God, against humanity, and against creation. It stands in direct opposition to the great commandment of love, the summary of the whole law (Galatians 5:14). Those who deny the genocide committed against the Palestinian people in Gaza — despite the overwhelming evidence, testimonies and even the statements of Zionists themselves — deny the very humanity of the Palestinian people. We have the right therefore to ask: **How can one speak of Christian fellowship or communion while denying, supporting, justifying or remaining silent before genocide** — especially when such acts are committed in the name of God and Scripture? There must be honest reflection and repentance by all believers, especially by church leaders throughout the world.

### 3.5

We express **our gratitude to all churches that have recognized the injustice inflicted upon us and the genocidal war in Gaza**. We salute all the voices that have taken a religious and moral stand against Zionism and so-called Christian Zionism — rejecting genocide and apartheid and calling for an end to arms shipments to Israel and for the prosecution of war criminals. We hear in these voices support of our hope, a sign of the Holy Spirit, and the presence of moral conscience in humanity.

### 3.6

**We call for a global theological movement** built on the pillars of God's Kingdom — one that arises from the contexts and struggles of peoples suffering from colonialism, racism, apartheid and the structural poverty produced by corrupt economic and political systems that serve the interests of the world's empires. We challenge the false logic of a "neutral" or "balanced" peace as well as forms of ecclesial diplomacy that do not speak truth to power as a way of evading moral and spiritual responsibility. Together with our partners around the world, we have engaged in self-examination to free ourselves from the residues of colonial theologies which we inherited from the West.

### 3.7

**We reject the oppression and injustice produced by the theology of racism, colonialism and ethnic supremacy embodied in Christian Zionism**, a theology that has produced apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and genocide of indigenous people. Christian Zionism calls on a tribal, racist god of war and ethnic cleansing, teachings utterly alien to the core of Christian faith and ethics. Christian Zionism must therefore be named for what it is: a theological and moral corruption. After all efforts to invite Christian Zionists to genuine repentance have been exhausted, moral, ecclesial and theological responsibility requires that they be held accountable and that their ideology be rejected and boycotted. The time has come for the churches of the world to repudiate Zionist theology and to state clearly their position on Palestine: this is a case of settler colonialism and ethnic cleansing of an indigenous people.

### 3.8

We condemn all who exploit and support the charge of **antisemitism** to silence the Palestinian voice of truth. **We reject every attempt to conflate antisemitism with**

**opposition to apartheid** and with pressure to hold Israel accountable under international law — particularly through the use of definitions and documents designed to serve Zionist ideologies and interests under the guise of combating antisemitism. The misuse of the term *antisemitism* distorts and obscures the reality of genuine antisemitism which still exists in our world and which we strongly **condemn alongside all forms of racism, exclusion and prejudice including Islamophobia**. Zionist ideology claims to represent and protect the Jewish people, but in doing so it has conflated “Jew” and “Zionist” as though they were one and the same. Not every Jew is a Zionist and not every Zionist is a Jew. This confusion has done great harm to Judaism itself and to its image worldwide.

### 3.9

We call upon all people of conscience — **believers in God from every faith and persons of conviction** — to join together in coalitions that safeguard humanity from further descent into the reality of injustice, tyranny and domination. We call for the creation of an alternative, just and humane world order as the present global system has failed in its most important responsibilities: to defend the weak and to preserve international peace and security.

### 3.10

We repeat and emphasize our appeal **to the churches of the world** — working together with both religious and secular coalitions — to pressure their governments to isolate Israel, hold it accountable, impose sanctions, boycott it, and to ban the export of arms until it complies with international law, ends oppression and tyranny, and adheres to the principles of justice and peace. We likewise call upon the governments of the world to press for the prosecution of war criminals whoever they may be under the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court; to ensure reparations for the Palestinian people, both in their homeland and in the diaspora; and to work for the immediate return of the displaced through the reconstruction of Gaza and the strengthening of its people’s steadfastness.

### 3.11

More than ever, now is a time for **costly solidarity**. By its very nature, true solidarity is costly. It has a price. It is a faith-based stance, a human commitment, and a moral responsibility. True solidarity is also the embodiment of our shared humanity and fraternity. Either we live together — or we perish together. Today it is Palestine. Tomorrow it will be other marginalized and oppressed peoples.

### 3.12

In this spirit, we honor the growing number of **Jewish voices** that oppose the war and confront Zionism from moral, faith-based and human conviction. In them we find partners in our shared humanity and in the struggle for freedom and human dignity — partners also in religious and political dialogue. For too many years such dialogue was monopolized by Zionists and their allies, its premises built upon the reinforcement of Zionist ideology and the persecution of Palestinians. We therefore call on the churches of the world **to distinguish between dialogue with Jews and dialogue with Zionism** — indeed, to boycott dialogue with Zionist voices that have supported and continue to support occupation, apartheid and the genocide of the Palestinian people. Instead, we call upon the churches to stand with and **amplify prophetic Jewish voices that call for justice and truth**.

### 3.13

**Christian solidarity means standing beside and supporting the local church** in its steadfastness, strengthening the steadfastness of believers in the land and empowering church and Christian institutions that embody the faith-based and humanitarian mission on the ground. Today we renew our appeal to Christians worldwide to challenge the siege imposed on the Christians of the Holy Land, to come and visit the *living stones*, to witness and respond to what you see, and to help strengthen the steadfastness of the Palestinians and the Christian Palestinians among them. This is our call: *"Come and see."* Then tell what you have seen, respond to it, and stand with the steadfast Church.

## Part IV – Faith in a Time of Genocide

### 4.1

From the land of the Incarnation, the Cross and the Resurrection, we renew our word of hope in the God of the poor, the oppressed and the downtrodden. The genocidal war has sought to strip us of our hope and faith in God's goodness and in life upon our land. Yet we declare our adherence to our faith in a holy and just God, and in the right God has given us to live with dignity on our land and the land of our ancestors. This is our hope. **This is our steadfastness. This is our resistance.**

### 4.2

We have heard much talk of **political solutions** and peace while the reality on the ground says otherwise. To speak of a political solution today is futile unless we first undertake the serious work of **acknowledging and rectifying past wrongs**—beginning with recognition of the **historic injustice done to Palestinians since the rise of the Zionist movement and the Balfour Declaration**. Any genuine beginning must involve **dismantling settler colonialism and the apartheid system built on Jewish supremacy as codified in Israel's racist Nation-State Law**. **We also reject proposals for a weakened, conditional state** lacking full sovereignty over its borders, waters, airspace and security. What is required is international action and protection, accountability for war criminals, and compensation for survivors of genocide, the Nakba and settler colonialism. **Enduring solutions will not rest on the logic of force, but on the foundations of justice, equality and the right to self-determination.**

### 4.3

**Our aim is to live as sons and daughters of God in our homeland without barriers, walls, military occupation and apartheid**—but in a world in which justice, fairness and equality rule. We envision a future in which our world is free of war, death, sectarianism and tribalism, where the word of truth rises above the word of power, where legitimacy belongs to peace and justice. We draw our hope from the Word of God and from the faith alive in our hearts, refusing to leave the shaping of the future to the voices of extremism, colonialism and supremacy.

### 4.4

**We reaffirm our rejection of a religious state**, for it constricts the state within narrow confines, favors one citizen over another, and excludes and discriminates among its

people. **Our hope is for a civil, democratic state grounded in a culture of pluralism**—not numerical dominance—that recognizes the goodness and worth of every person who belongs to this land. Such a culture, rooted in the commandment of love, obliges us to confront every form of extremism and racism in our land—rich as it is in the diversity of its peoples, cultures and religions—**on the basis of equality before the law and full citizenship.**

#### 4.5

From the heart of pain, genocide and displacement, we raise this cry—a prophetic cry of steadfastness. We declare our commitment to work for the good of this land and of all humanity on the basis of our shared humanity **until the day we live free in our land together with all the inhabitants of the land in true peace and reconciliation founded on justice and equality for all God’s creation, where mercy and truth meet, and righteousness and peace kiss each other. (Psalm 85:10).**

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## Appendix 3: Minutes of British Quaker discernment on Palestine and Israel

### Boycott, divestment and sanctions (Israel/Palestine) [agreed 2011]

Further to minute S/11/02/4 of 5 February 2011, we receive minutes on this matter from the following Area Meetings: Southern Marches (paper S/11/04/mc i a), Sussex East (i b), Surrey & Hampshire Border (i c), Swarthmoor (i f), North London (i g), Cambridgeshire (i h), East Cheshire (i i), Ipswich & Diss (i j), North West London (i k), Bristol (i l), Hampshire & Islands (i m), Devon (i n), Manchester & Warrington (i o) and North Cumbria (i p).

Our assistant clerk has summarised the 14 Area Meeting minutes received, and we have returned to our consideration of the issues raised in the papers received at our last meeting (paper S/11/02/A prepared by Marigold Bentley, Assistant General Secretary of Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW), the Kairos Palestine Document A moment of truth (paper S/11/02/B), and the Quaker Council for European Affairs Discussion Paper entitled Responses to the call for boycott, divestment and sanctions (S/11/02/C)).

We have heard of the responses of Jewish Peace Groups within Israel. We hear these Israeli citizens risk being criminalised by their government if they actively support the Palestinian call for cultural and economic boycott. We were informed that most Jewish Israeli Peace Groups support the boycott of settlement goods, and only some support a boycott of Israel.

A just peace for Palestine means security for Israel too, and nonviolent protests by both Israelis and Palestinians for the end of the occupation are heartening to observe.

For nine years Quakers have been witnessing individually and through the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) to the human rights abuses of the military occupation of the Palestinian Territories. Today we have considered whether we should add nonviolent action to our witnessing – not as punishment or revenge, but as an external pressure to achieve change.

We understand the history and the trauma of the past, but it is Israelis who are the stronger and they need to make the changes.

John Woolman's words (Quaker faith & practice 26.61) remind us of the powerful sense we have of being brothers and sisters with people of other faiths. There are three main faiths in this part of the world, and we want to proceed in ways which allow dialogue to continue. We consider we should now act publically and, well-informed, be able to explain our action to others - because people matter more than territory, and because we approach others with a desire for peace.

Difficult decisions taken by us today can be reversed. The request for boycott comes from those who will suffer most, but a decision for boycott will give hope to Palestinians and support to those in Israel who are working for peace.

In the face of the armed oppression of poor people and the increasing encroachment of the illegal settlements in the West Bank, we cannot do nothing.

Our hearts are full of compassion for Israelis and Palestinians, all of whom are suffering from the effects of the occupation.

We are clear that it would be wrong to support the illegal settlements by purchasing their goods. We therefore ask Friends (Quakers) throughout Britain Yearly Meeting to boycott settlement goods, until such time as the occupation is ended.

We are not at this time proposing to boycott goods from Israel itself, being unwilling to jeopardise continuing dialogue with Israelis and British Jews.

We pray fervently for both Israelis and Palestinians, keeping them together in our hearts. We hope they will find an end to their fears and the beginning of their mutual co-existence based on a just peace. And so we look forward to the end of the occupation and the end of the international boycott. We envisage our future relationship with both peoples as one of loving and generous co-operation.

Although we unite in this decision we recognise that Friends have different views, and we must treat one another tenderly.

### **A statement on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict made by Quakers in Britain at their Yearly Meeting in Bath, August 8, 2014**

At this time of sombre anniversaries, as we observe the centenary of the outbreak of World War I and the anniversaries of nuclear bombs dropped on the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we find our Quaker testimonies to peace and equality again compel us to speak out.

The hostilities in Gaza are the latest eruption of the deep and long-running conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Root causes of this conflict, including the structural violence of occupation, must be addressed. Such violence damages all the people of the region. The present time, with its faltering ceasefires and talks, is a time of both crisis and opportunity.

From our long-standing Quaker experience of working on this issue in Palestine, Israel and Britain, and from listening to the testimony of Quakers in Ramallah, we are convinced that the UK government has a real role to play. A starting place would be for the UK to recognise Palestine as a nation state on the same basis as it recognises Israel. We note that 134 states have already recognised the State of Palestine. The UK government should also play its part in creating a real opportunity for peace by drawing groups such as Hamas into the political process and thus away from violent resistance to the occupation. We have seen around the world how those once labelled as terrorists can come to be recognised for their statesmanship. It is our view that freeing elected Palestinian leaders now held as political prisoners would help Palestine to develop as a flourishing economic, political and civil society.

The international community remains complicit in the conflict for as long as it fails to make full use of the mechanisms provided by international law, to hold all parties to account for their actions. Under international law, at all times, all parties should distinguish between civilians and combatants, though as Quakers we place equal value on every human life. The Israeli government's ongoing blockade of Gaza and its apparent collective punishment of the people must end, as must indiscriminate fire by all sides.

Amid the present crisis, we are reminded that the people of the West Bank, living under Israeli occupation, face restrictions on movement, loss of land and water, demolitions, the

continuing building of settlements, detention without trial and violence by settlers and the Israeli military. Such suffering often sows seeds of future violence.

The anniversary of World War I reminds us how easily militarised societies can slide into armed conflict and become blind to the alternatives to war. At such times, the international community has a responsibility to avoid fuelling the conflict. We join others in asking for a comprehensive arms embargo on Israel, Hamas and armed Palestinian groups. Quakers in Britain ask the UK government to take a lead on this by halting arms exports to Israel.

As we, among other Nobel Peace Laureates, have said, 'the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis will only be resolved when Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory is ended and the inherent equality, worth, and dignity of all is realised'. Peacebuilding is a long and demanding path to take, but an essential one.

Quakers in Britain feel called to act alongside others to address the roots of violence. We continue to uphold Quakers in the region and those working nonviolently for peace and human rights within Israel and Palestine. Quakers will continue to challenge antisemitism and Islamophobia, as we oppose all forms of prejudice. We long for – and will work for – a time when the deep fear experienced on all sides is replaced by security and a just peace.

## BYMT-2018-11-05 Finance and resources reports

### [c. Investment policy and BYM investments in Israel/Palestine](#)

We receive Finance & Property Committee meeting minute FP18/69(b) and draft investment policy (BYMT-2018-11-02(l)).

We receive Meeting for Sufferings minute MfS/18/10/19 (BYMT-2018-11-02k) which reaffirms its decision made in 2011 to boycott settlement goods until such time as the Israeli occupation of Palestine is ended. There are currently no investments in any company profiting from the occupation of Palestine; Meeting for Sufferings encourages us to amend our investment policy to ensure that this remains the case.

We adopt the investment policy including this provision.

We send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings and hope this policy might be useful to area meetings interested in adopting a similar approach.

## Meeting for Sufferings 5 October 2024

### [MfS/24/10/09 Our work in Palestine and Israel](#)

Further to minute MfS/24/06/09, we receive paper MfS 2024 10 11 which provides a report on discernment from Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) on the use of the terms genocide and apartheid in relation to the current conflict in Palestine and Israel.

Our twin roles as prophets and reconcilers may be difficult to balance. We reaffirm that ultimately our task is to engage in peace building focused on ending the illegal occupation and seeking justice for all who live there and the surrounding region, however we note that

in this situation our primary role is to bear witness. "The first skill [in addressing conflict] is naming: being clear and honest about the problem as I see it" (Quaker faith & practice 20.71). We note the recommendation that we should align with the International Court of Justice rulings that the term apartheid is an accurate description of the situation in occupied Palestine and that there is a plausible risk of genocide in Gaza. We accept this advice as honouring our commitment to speak truth in love. As George Fox said, "My allegiance lies in truth and faithfulness" (*Quaker faith & practice* 19.37)

We also note the increasing tensions in our own society, where some faith communities face significant hostility, and that we have significant work to do in supporting interfaith relationships here. "Let all things be done for building up", (1 Corinthians 14:26). We recognise that additional work may require the commitment of additional resources.

## At the Yearly Meeting in London at Friends House and online, 23–26 May 2025

### Minute 30: Gaza

'Fear is what happens in the absence of love.' (Emily Provance, Swarthmore Lecture 2025)

Radical peacemaking requires us to engage with and to acknowledge truth in all its discomfort, complexity and cruelty. Quakers historically have spoken truth to power. We need to heed the promptings of love and truth in our hearts and speak up now.

Last year, Meeting for Sufferings minuted its alignment with the International Court of Justice rulings that the term apartheid was an accurate description of the situation in occupied Palestine and that there was a plausible risk of genocide in Gaza. Meeting for Sufferings felt compelled to speak out following decades of direct Quaker witness and peace work in Palestine and Israel.

Since then, we have watched with horror as the Israeli government has deepened its collective punishment of Palestinians for the heinous, unjustified crimes of Hamas on 7 October 2023.

Over the last three months, we have witnessed the deliberate mass starvation of a people and dismantling of almost all life-sustaining systems within Gaza. We have seen the forced movement of Palestinians and a stated intention to expel them from Gaza. We have heard Israeli government ministers incite hatred against and dehumanise Palestinians. We have heard language and witnessed actions that cannot be justified and strike at the core of our common humanity.

In a world where we are seeing cases in many countries of outrageous inhumanity, dehumanisation and the cruel actions that follow from denying the worth and dignity of all, what is being done in Gaza is no less terrible for not being unique. Our long history of witness and peace work in Palestine and Israel gives us particular experience from which to speak on this issue. The fact that we are speaking about Gaza does not absolve us of our responsibility to learn about and respond to other atrocities around the world.

We understand that genocide under international law must meet certain strict criteria. It means specific acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national,

ethnic, racial or religious group. Genocide scholars are clear that genocide does not constitute one overwhelming, horrific act only, but is a process with many stages.

With this in mind, and guided by the testimony and judgement of Palestinians, Israelis, and genocide and legal experts we look to and work with, we are therefore led to say that we believe that genocide and mass displacement are underway in the actions of the Israeli government and its military towards the population of Gaza, recognising that a legal judgement on this is a matter for the International Courts.

We know that for many in the Jewish community, this word brings deep and real fear. Fear that the term 'genocide' fuels antisemitism, that it attacks their core Jewish identity and safety. That it reduces a complex, existential conflict to a simple story of 'good' and 'bad'. We acknowledge the historical weight of this term for Jewish people, set against centuries of anti-Jewish hatred and crimes, and the ultimate horror and genocide of the Holocaust. We acknowledge the history and present day reality of anti-Jewish hatred in the UK, a hatred that was exported worldwide by British and other European colonial powers. We acknowledge the historic and current role of the British state in creating the context of this conflict and the tragedy we see playing out now.

Central to Quakerism is the experience that there is that of God in everyone. From this belief – that all people are unique, precious, children of God – all others follow. We therefore abhor racism, including antisemitism, in all its forms. We grieve the pain and fear that our friends in Jewish communities are experiencing at this time.

We see and uphold those in Jewish communities and in Israel working for peace and justice for Palestinian people.

And so, we cannot say clearly enough: it is this current Israeli government that we are led to say we believe is committing genocide. Jewish people are not committing genocide. The Israeli people are not committing genocide. We abhor, and will challenge, any attempt to exploit our words to incite, fuel, or commit anti-Jewish and antisemitic hatred or violence. We abhor, and will challenge, any attempt to use our words to question the existence of Israel or the Israeli people's right to live in peace and security.

It is also a tenet of Quakerism that violence can never be the answer. That the means are just as important as the ends. This is our peace testimony that has led us for more than 350 years to eschew all war and all violence at all times. We cry out for the violence in Gaza to stop – for an end to the killing of Palestinians and for the Israeli hostages to be returned home. We cry out for Palestinians and Israelis to be safe and to live thriving, joyous lives in their homelands. Everyone deserves a place to live where they don't feel scared. Our long work for peace tells us that security for some bought with the insecurity of others tears at our collective humanity and is only ever temporary. Peace can never be brought about by the systematic oppression of others.

We therefore use the word 'genocide' after deep discernment. We use this word with the aim of opening eyes, minds and hearts. We use this word in the deep hope that the actions it describes will stop.