

**WDC Israel Palestine Relations Task Force**  
**Annual Report to WDC Annual Assembly July 29-31, 2022**  
<http://mennowdc.org/committees-task-forces/>

**Members:** Bob Atchison, Katie Mitchell-Koch, Esther Koontz, Michael Poage, Kathy Neufeld Dunn -WDC Staff Representative

**Purpose:** To facilitate the implementation of *Seeking Peace in Israel Palestine*, the resolution overwhelmingly passed by Mennonite Church USA in July 2017. To promote education and advocacy to bring peace and justice to the on-going crisis in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel. The Task Force met five times since the 2021 Annual WDC Assembly.

**Activity Highlights**

- The task force shared their annual report and a video on the Racial Justice from US to Palestine at the 2021 WDC Annual Assembly. The Task Force also presented a Zoom presentation on their work as one of the breakouts. The Hand-to-Hand project has raised \$9,308 for the Youth Vision Society in Gaza to distribute food baskets and COVID supplies to the Beach Refugee Camp.
- **Beyond the Two State Solution Book Discussion** – Through a grant with WDC Resource Commission 20 copies of Jonathan Kuttab’s book *Beyond the Two State Solution* were purchased and distributed to people prior to a book discussion that was held April 5, 2022. Kuttab provided an overview of the book and around 25 people participated in the discussion.
- **Manhattan Mennonite Church and Youth Vision Society** – Since December of 2019, members of Manhattan Mennonite Church’s Peace, Service and Witness Team have been participating in MennoPIN’s Twinning Initiative with Gaza. This is the 4th year of bi-monthly Zoom meetings with a non-profit organization called the [Youth Vision Society](#). The Youth Vision Society oversees the Edward Said Library and since its inception in 2009 has completed over 26 different projects that provide economic empowerment of women, psychological support for vulnerable children, education for youth and humanitarian aid. In addition to members of the Peace, Service and Witness Team, Lydia Brenneman, MennoPIN Steering Committee member, has also joined the meetings serving as a translator for Arabic and Palestinian culture. Though initially there were a number of participants from Youth Vision Society, most meetings are hosted by Tareq Abuhamila and sometimes Executive Director Iyad El Ejil. The meetings are very informal and help to create relationships between YVS and MMC. During most meetings, YVS shares information on their projects and how the pandemic has affected lives and families. We have sometimes shared music, politics, favorite foods and books.

MMC has assisted YVS with grant writing to the US Consulate in Jerusalem and written support letters to non-profit organizations in the US encouraging project partnerships. Paul Neufeld Weaver, Professor & Director of Global Education at Bluffton University, has joined in grant writing and connecting Bluffton students with young adults in Gaza. There is on-going discussion of sponsoring a YVS trip in 2022 to enable Tareq to connect with Mennonite Twinning Congregations and perhaps present at our national Mennonite Church USA Conference in KC.