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Mennonite Jewish Relations Working Group Responds to the war in Israel-Palestine

As the Mennonite Jewish Relations working group, we join in the grief of our Jewish and Palestinian siblings around the world given the events of October 7, 2023, the Jewish Sabbath and celebration of the Jewish holiday Simchat Torah when Hamas carried out one of the deadliest attacks on Israel. We condemn the actions of Hamas and that of the Israeli military in response that has led to the killings of civilians of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Much of the coverage has depicted a dichotomy between Palestine and Israel. While we recognize the experiences of both to be different, we also recognize the fear is real on both sides. The pain is real on both sides. Both call this land home, and it is currently teeming with the blood of innocents and tears of both Israelis and Palestinians in the violence. The violence enacted by Hamas and the response of the Israeli military brings back generational trauma for all involved and their diasporas. The story of this tragedy does not begin now in 2023, nor in 1973, nor 1948. It is a deeply intertwined history of suffering that we must continue to work to comprehend so that we may walk with our siblings to find a way out of it.

We invite you to join us in:

- a) Redoubling our commitment to humble learning across the lines of faith that divide when God would have them unite.
- b) Centering the voices and experiences of Israelis and Palestinians.
- c) Remembering that Jews have different views on Israel and Israeli policies of occupation and siege. Remembering that Hamas does not represent all Palestinians.
- d) Remembering that many Palestinians and Israelis want to coexist and live with equal rights and freedoms.
- e) Supporting and holding space for Israelis and Palestinians to work together and in their own communities for a more lasting peaceful political solution.
- f) Working for freedom and justice of all people.
- g) Committing to the work of understanding the deep history within the Middle East and how we as Mennonites have played a role in that region.

As the Co-Director of the Jewish-Arab Movement for Peace, Equality & Social Justice in Israel, Alon-Lee Green, said, "Our greatest mission now, after the terrible tragedy we went through and are still going through, should be not to let anger and feelings of revenge burn everything. In the great fire that will be lit, we will all burn, Israelis and Palestinians...We need to find a way of not living in the endless loop of death, hatred, and blood. Of no occupation and no wars. Those who currently promise us only more killing, promise us revenge. Not security...They promise us death, not life."

As Anabaptists, we stand against the use of war, violence, and fear by the state and political entities to further their causes. As people of peace we follow the "Prince of Peace" in word and action. May we bring comfort to all who suffer and work to protect all experiencing physical and emotional violence.

The Mennonite Jewish Relations Working Group is an outgrowth of the 2017 resolution passed by delegates at the MCUSA conference in Orlando, FL entitled "[Seeking Peace in Israel and Palestine: A Resolution for Mennonite Church USA.](#)" Our work centers on brainstorming ways to continue to decolonize and combat white supremacy and Christian superiority that has led to antisemitic rhetoric and violence even within our own faith communities. To this end, MJR is focused on working within the U.S. and Canada, and does not explicitly engage in the Israel-Palestine conflict and resulting politics. Those who wish to connect with us can reach us at MennoJewishRelations@gmail.com