

Senator/Representative

Date

Dear Senator/Representative

Grace and peace to you.

It is with a heavy heart and a troubled spirit that we write this letter, appealing for the end of US support of violence, destruction, and the unlawful occupation and seizing of land by Israeli settlers and the Israeli military in Gaza and the West Bank.

During the recent Annual Meeting of our fifty-two Mennonite congregations of the Central District Conference of Mennonite Church USA, participants expressed our collective concern and outrage at the violence experienced by Palestinians, Israelis, and others in the region. Our 92 delegates unanimously affirmed a resolution entitled "Response to Ongoing Suffering in Palestine." In our resolution we stated, in part, *"We lament and denounce the killing of Israelis by Hamas on October 7, 2023. We also lament our complicity, as Americans, whose tax dollars fund genocide against Palestinians, and as Christians whose theology has been used to justify it."*

In addition to our lament, we encouraged our congregations and individuals to consider various actions, including:

- *We commit to divesting ourselves financially from the U.S.-backed Israeli genocide and theologically from Christian Zionism.*
- *Answer the call to Boycott, Divestments, and Sanctions (BDS). In line with the call from Kairos Palestine II - A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time of Genocide document (Kairos II): Central District Conference members are urged to support creative non-violent resistance, including educating congregants and pastors about boycott campaigns and investment justice tools, such as the American Friends Service Committee's "Investigate" and Everence's "Peace in Palestine and Israel Fund," to divest from Israeli apartheid and genocide.*

As a conference of Mennonite churches, "We believe that peace is the will of God. God created the world in peace, and God's peace is most fully revealed in Jesus Christ, who is our peace and the peace of the whole world. Led by the Holy Spirit, we follow Christ in the way of peace, doing justice, bringing reconciliation, and practicing nonresistance even in the face of violence and warfare." (*Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, Article 22: *Peace, Justice, and Nonresistance*.)

We fully recognized the political complexities of the US relationship with Israel. What is not complex is the injustice, violence, apartheid and genocide of the Palestinian people. That is real and it must stop.

We urge you to do all you can to change the course of history, advocate for peace and justice which utilizes creative non-violent tactics, end US financing of ongoing military actions by Israel, and enact policies that provide relief, end violence, and seek a just peace in the region.