

From the MeckMIN Staff and Board of Directors

We reach out to you with heavy hearts. This is a fearful time; the violence is overwhelming. Hamas attackers invaded Israel and murdered more than 1,200 civilians. In response, Israeli military operations have intensified in Gaza. Thousands of Israelis and Palestinians- including women, children, and the elderly- have been killed and injured and even yet the violence continues.

We are shaken by the knowledge of how many have been and are being killed and injured, how many remain in harm's way, how many are searching for loved ones, and are struggling with grief and fear. We ache with the many who must watch from afar as places and people they love suffer.

Although the violence is taking place in Israel and Gaza, it also hits close to home. People we know and love have lost friends and family or, agonizingly, do not yet know the fate of loved ones. Our hearts ache with theirs.

What does our mission of interfaith cooperation to foster understanding, compassion and justice require us to do in the face of unspeakable violence?

We mourn. We grieve the loss of life and weep with those who suffer. We condemn the violence, especially against civilians—and particularly children and the elderly, the most vulnerable members of our human family.

We pray. Though it seems beyond distant at this moment, we pray and urge all people of faith to pray for peace with justice, equality, and hope for all people, a deep, lasting, and just peace that addresses core systemic issues of the ongoing conflict, from Palestinian needs for self-determination and freedom to Israel's needs for safety and security.

We reach out and we listen. Silence around this moment advances neither justice nor peace. But what do we say to our friends and neighbors? For fear of offending someone, we often say nothing. But our friends and allies want to hear from us. We can start by reaching out to friends impacted by this violence—those in our own faith community and beyond it—to ask how they are doing, to hear their hurt, fear, rage, and grief.

We commit to standing up for one another. We are deeply concerned by the rise in Antisemitic and Islamophobic bullying and bigotry and threats of violence. Credible threats are pouring into synagogues and mosques. We are even hearing reports that other forms of seemingly unrelated hatred – like that toward immigrants – is spiking. We pray for the safety and security of all religious and cultural communities in the United States and around the world.

And, however small it may seem against the magnitude of the weight of history and the current violence, we continue our work. We invite your feedback on how we might best do it well in these deeply challenging times.

Dearest friends, even as we write these words we know that they are incomplete and imperfect. We know that you may feel that we have not said enough or responded quickly enough. Though our words will not and cannot meet the moment fully, we do not want to remain silent. Please know that these thoughts, with all their limitations, come with genuine love, fervent prayers, and a deep longing for full justice for all people.

In this moment of immense hatred, may we even yet find ways to love each other well.

*We offer gratitude to our colleagues at The Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies in Baltimore, Maryland who graciously allowed us to adapt some of the language above from a statement they issued on October 10.*