

1 Resolution #4 Calling for a Ceasefire and Humanitarian Action in Gaza

2 Resolved that the 229th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia meeting in
3 Fredericksburg, Virginia, November 2-4, 2023, calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, urging
4 all parties involved to cease hostilities and protect the lives of innocent civilians.

5 Resolved that we call upon all parties involved in the conflict, including the Government of Israel
6 and Hamas, to exercise restraint and cease targeting civilians, including hospitals, churches,
7 schools, shelters, refugee camps, and UN and humanitarian agencies, recognizing the sacredness
8 of all human life.

9 Resolved that we call upon Hamas to release all hostages and captives in their custody as an act of
10 goodwill and a step towards de-escalation.

11 Resolved that we urge both Israel and Hamas to return to the negotiating table in good faith to
12 achieve a just and lasting peace in the region.

13 Resolved that we call upon the United States government to use its diplomatic influence to
14 encourage Israel to halt the war and prioritize dialogue over conflict resolution, with the aim of
15 saving lives and fostering peace.

16 Resolved that we call upon the International Community to support the establishment of a two-
17 state solution to broker a sustainable peace in the region.

18 Resolved that we emphasize the need to restore communication channels and open humanitarian
19 corridors to ensure the delivery of essential aid and support to the people of Gaza, who are facing
20 a dire humanitarian crisis, and to cease using starvation as a weapon of war.

21 Resolved that we commit to praying for all those affected by this conflict and for a peaceful
22 resolution that respects the dignity and rights of all people in the region.

23 Resolved that this resolution be communicated to President Biden and Vice President Harris;
24 Secretary of State Blinken; Unites States Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas;
25 Senator Ben Cardin, Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Senator James E. Risch,
26 Ranking Member; Representative Michael McCaul, Chair and Representative Gregory Meeks,
27 Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee; all members of Congress; The
28 Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations in Washington DC; Benjamin Netanyahu,
29 leader of Israel; Ismail Haniyeh, leader of Hamas; the Secretary General of the United Nations;
30 and the President of the United Nations Security Council.

31 Submitted by:

32 The Rev. Marian Windel

33 The Very Rev. Kathleen Murray

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35 Explanation:

36 In a land we call "HOLY" countless atrocities are happening. The current war
37 between Israel and Palestine should be of concern to all Episcopalians in the
38 Diocese of Virginia as thousands of innocent children of God have died, and
39 millions are suffering as a result of this conflict. This war is set on a path to totally
40 eradicate the other side leaving death and destruction in its wake.

41 Our baptismal covenant calls us to strive for justice and peace, among all people,
42 and to respect the dignity of every human being. A just and lasting solution to the
43 Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be achieved through conflict, but only through
44 peaceful negotiations. The United States, as a key ally of Israel, has a significant
45 role to play in promoting peace and saving lives in this conflict working with both

46 Israel and Hamas to take immediate steps toward de-escalation, humanitarian
47 assistance, and the protection of civilians.

48 The Ahli Abra Hospital, property of the Diocese of Jerusalem suffered damage
49 and hundreds lost their lives. This hospital was and continues to be a refuge for
50 many seeking a safe location to escape from the fighting. Our sisters and brothers
51 working there are trying to save lives without gasoline to operate their generators
52 or enough medical supplies or beds to care for patients. Without any electricity,
53 infants in incubators are dying, pregnant women who need a cesarean are dying as
54 well as others who need surgery because surgeries can't be performed in the dark,
55 and people dependent on oxygen concentrators run by electricity are also dying,
56 constant bombardment of Gaza has created these inhumane conditions.

57 This Diocese has a history and vested interest in our sisters and brothers in the
58 Episcopal Diocese Of Jerusalem. In 1988, at the time of the first Intifada, the Rt.
59 Rev. Peter James Lee, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, and the Rt.
60 Rev. Samir Kafity, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, saw the need
61 for a safe, secure channel to allow Americans to support schools, hospitals, and
62 centers for children with disabilities in the Holy Land. American Friends of the
63 Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem (AFEDJ) was born.

64 God shows no partiality in this current war but must be weeping over both the
65 Palestinians and Jews who claim Abraham as their patriarch. May we who also
66 claim Abraham as our patriarch work for peacemaking with and among our sisters
67 and brothers.

68 **Prayer for a Country Called War**

69 Every time you kiss your children,
70 Remember those who have lost theirs.
71 Every time you take a sip of water,
72 Remember those who have no food, no drink.
73 Every time you call your parents,

74 Remember those who have no way of knowing if their loved ones are alive or dead.
75 Every time you flick on a light switch,
76 Remember those who have no power.
77 Every time you look up to a sunny or cloudy sky,
78 Remember those for whom it rains only missiles.
79 Every time you lie down for a peaceful sleep,
80 Remember those for whom life is only a long, treacherous night,
81 For whom safety is an unreachable mirage.
82 Every time you write out your address,
83 Remember those who live in a country called War.
84 There is no way to wrap our arms all the way around the globe.
85 But let us try.
86 Let us try.
87 Amen.
88 Cameron Bellm