



Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

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June 16, 2011

Letter of Support for Lyn Adamson, participant in the 2011 “Freedom Flotilla to Gaza II”

Lyn Adamson is a lifelong member of Toronto Monthly Meeting, a Quaker congregation within Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). She is also an associate member of Canadian Friends Service Committee, the peace and service arm of Quakers in Canada.

Lyn Adamson’s years of work in developing non-violent responses to conflict is well known to Friends. Her particular concern for peace in Palestine and Israel has led her to join in the organization of the “Freedom Flotilla to Gaza II”. When she was invited to be on the Canadian boat and to be a non-violence trainer for the participants, she asked Toronto Monthly Meeting to help her examine this opportunity. This process is called “testing a leading” in Quaker practice. Toronto Monthly Meeting endorsed her participation in the flotilla. Since then, several other Meetings (congregations) in Canada have so far also minuted their support (Vancouver, Coldstream and Simcoe-Muskoka Monthly Meetings).

Canadian Friends Service Committee recognizes that Lyn’s participation in the flotilla is in keeping with the Canadian Yearly Meeting’s policy statement (2009) concerning Israel and Palestine, which says in part,

As Quakers, we reject the use of military force and violence by state or non-state actors. We believe that strategies of nonviolence are the only ethically sound, and ultimately more successful, strategies for overcoming oppression. Our experience with nonviolence has shown that there is a place both for acts of resistance and for the provision of a safe space for individuals of opposing views to dialogue. There have been many dialogue activities, and further opportunities for such work may open up. However, Palestinian nonviolent activists and their Israeli allies agree that the current need is for strong acts of nonviolent resistance and international advocacy....

Urgently, at this moment, we encourage Friends to take part in nonviolent campaigns to end the continuing blockade of Gaza and to end evictions of Palestinians from their homes. Concerned Friends who have visited the region are also drawing our attention to the unjust distribution of scarce resources, in particular, water.

We call on the State of Israel to end the blockade of Gaza, and to end the occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. We call on the State of Israel and the Palestinians to end assaults against civilians.

We call on the Israeli government and any future state of Palestine to respect each other’s right to exist within safe, secure, and defined borders, and to grant equal rights, protections, privileges and responsibilities to all of their respective citizens.

CFSC thus joins the Monthly Meetings in endorsing Lyn's participation in the Flotilla, which is organized entirely on a non-violent basis, aims to deliver much-needed humanitarian aid supplies, and carries no arms.

CFSC was deeply saddened last year when a similar flotilla carrying humanitarian aid, and screened for weapons before sailing, was boarded by the Israeli military while in international waters, resulting in the deaths of nine members of the flotilla delegation and the injuring of others. We expressed our horror at this response by the Government of Israel in a letter to the Canadian government.

We are reminded that a year ago, the International Committee of the Red Cross, traditionally a neutral organization, publicly stated that the blockade of Gaza violates international law and that the only sustainable solution to the crisis is lifting the closure, that humanitarian aid provision is not enough. "The whole of Gaza's civilian population is being punished for acts for which they bear no responsibility. The closure therefore constitutes a collective punishment imposed in clear violation of Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law."¹

We pray for Lyn's safety, for the safety of all participants, for the end of the blockade, the recovery of the people of Gaza from the suffering that the blockade has caused them, and for realization of peace and safety for all peoples of Israel and Palestine. We call upon all governments and legal officials to respect the non-violent humanitarian nature of the flotilla and to allow it to land in Gaza to deliver its shipment.

In Friendship,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Merrill Stewart". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Merrill Stewart
Clerk,
Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

For more information about Canadian Quakers' concern for peace in Palestine and Israel, please consult our website at www.quakerservice.ca or call our office at 416-920-5213.

¹ <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/update/palestine-update-140610.htm>