



Key principles for room lettings in Friends House

16 November 2023

Quakers in Britain have discerned positions on Palestine and Israel, and you might find it helpful to remind yourself of these. We will let rooms to groups who have different views to us, but there are some 'red lines' and key principles that Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) uses to guide room lettings in relation to Palestine and Israel. Quaker meetings may also find this useful in making decisions about lettings:

- One of the key principles of our room letting policy is not to give space to any group calling for violence in any form. This is because Quakers have a longstanding commitment to peace and nonviolence, and we therefore cannot host an event calling for any kind of violence or armed struggle. This includes when the group calls for increased militancy in public statements or on their website, even if the event itself may not do so.
- We support the right of Israel to exist and the right to self-determination for Palestinians. In our work we call for a just peace based on international law. We therefore cannot host any groups denying these fundamental rights.
- Quakers in Britain has made a commitment to become an **anti-racist** organisation. We believe that all forms of racism, including antisemitism and Islamophobia, are barriers to building a just and peaceful world. We abhor the history of antisemitism and Islamophobia in the UK and around the world and the current rise in antisemitic and Islamophobic attacks. We therefore cannot host any event which uses racist language or hate speech, or might in any way build intolerance or prejudice.
- We are non-partisan. We are not pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian. We are not, however, neutral in terms of **international law and human rights**. We are unwavering in our belief that any practice used to occupy territory or to resist occupation must comply with international law (we call this 'Principled Impartiality').

Overall we choose not to share our physical resources – including financial resources and hired spaces – with those who advocate against the Quaker testimonies to peace and equality and the principles outlined above: nonviolence, anti-racism and respect for international law.

In these circumstances we engage with the group in question to explain our principles and why we cannot let rooms to them at this time.

BYM can and will offer support on difficult room bookings. For support, contact the BYM communications team using media@quaker.org.uk.