

A RESOLUTION OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS REGARDING THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Based on the resolution text presented by the United Church of Christ Palestine/Israel Network Steering Committee, modified at the request of the NH Conference Executive Committee to meet guidelines for proposed resolutions.

Presented by the Peace with Justice Advocates of the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ, with the recommendation of the Peace & Justice Ministry of the NH Conference UCC

SUBMITTED on August 11, 2014

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SUMMARY: This resolution includes four major parts: 1) A call to study the 2009 Kairos Palestine document; 2) a call to United Church of Christ entities to divest holdings from companies profiting from the occupation of the Palestinian territories; 3) a call to all entities of the UCC to boycott goods produced by Israeli companies in the occupied Palestinian territories; and 4) a call to request Congress to investigate whether US military aid given to Israel violates US laws.

BACKGROUND STATEMENT: In 1985 the Fifteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ committed itself to be a Just Peace Church;² and at its 2003 Annual Meeting in, the NH Conference committed itself to be a Just Peace Conference.

Historically the UCC has affirmed Israel's right to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries (GS 16 [1987],³ GS 18 [1991]),⁴ and asserted the rights of Palestinians to enjoy sovereignty in an independent, contiguous, and viable state of their own, within secure and recognized boundaries (GS 16 [1987], GS 17 [1989],⁵ GS 18 [1991]).

Past General Synods have identified the Israeli Occupation of Palestinian land and its human rights abuses committed therein to be a major source of conflict and have called for the end of the construction and expansion of settlements (GS 18 [1991], GS 21 [1997]).⁶

The UCC is deeply committed to interfaith relationships and General Synods have confessed to the sin of anti-Semitism and proclaimed its renunciation (GS 23 [2001])⁷ and have denounced actions against Islam or Muslims based on ignorance or fear (GS 28 [2011]).⁸

SCRIPTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT: The psalmist celebrates, “How good it is when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity” (Psalm 133). Yet today the Middle East is torn by disunity between Semitic brothers and sisters separated by “dividing walls of hostility” (Ephesians 2:14). We hear the call of the prophet Micah, “And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8). As disciples of Jesus, we hear and seek to heed his call to be peacemakers: responding to violence with non-violence and extending love to all. In the words of our Palestinian Christian partners in Kairos Palestine, “True Christian theology is a theology of love and solidarity with the oppressed, a call to justice and equality among peoples.” (Kairos-Palestine 2009: A Moment of Truth)¹

Therefore, in the spirit of the ancient prophets and the ministry of Jesus, we offer this resolution:

RATIONALE:

WHEREAS the UCC values its relationships with Jewish groups in the US who have differing perspectives on the conflict and with Jewish Israeli peace activists who have sought justice, equality, and freedom for both peoples; and

WHEREAS the UCC recognizes the complexity of the conflict and that it has caused suffering for both Palestinians and Israelis; and

WHEREAS Palestinians in the West Bank have lived since 1967 under Israeli military occupation which subjects them to many human rights abuses, including loss of their land for the purpose of building Israeli settlements; limited access to their land and to each other due to the route of the Separation Wall on Occupied Palestinian Territory; being systematically pushed into small, noncontiguous geographic enclaves separated by barriers and checkpoints; gross

inequality in the amount of water allocated to Palestinians; severe and arbitrary travel restrictions; limited access to holy sites; segregated roads; the demolition of homes; the destruction of Palestinians' crops by settlers and the Israeli army; arbitrary arrest, including the arrest of children;⁹ and

WHEREAS the Israeli government subjects Palestinians in Gaza to military attacks using disproportionately overwhelming force; severe limits on personal entry and the entry of products essential to Gazans' well-being; a six-mile fishing limit in violation of international law; strict Israeli control of electronic communications, air space, and sea space; and the destruction of Gaza's infrastructure and economy;¹⁰ and

WHEREAS Israel has annexed Palestinian East Jerusalem, separating it from the West Bank and Gaza, and subjects Palestinians of East Jerusalem to the appropriation of their properties for Jewish settlements, the denial of building permits, and the revocation of residency rights;¹¹ and

WHEREAS Israel refuses to end its occupation of territory conquered in the 1967 War, leading to numerous illegal actions and human rights abuses there by the Israeli government and military in defiance of United Nations resolutions,¹² and refuses to respect the Fourth Geneva Convention, as called for by the International Court of Justice in its opinion concerning the Separation Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;¹³ and

WHEREAS through the Kairos Palestine document of 2009 our Palestinian Christian partners, seeking an alternative to violence born of hopelessness and despair, have called on their global partners to engage in non-violent measures pressuring Israel to end its occupation;¹⁴ and

WHEREAS the resolution "Concerning the Use of Economic Leverage in Promoting Peace in the

Middle East," passed by the General Synod in 2005, called upon "the Covenanted Ministries, Pension Boards, United Church Foundation, local churches and members to use economic leverage, including, but not limited to: advocating the reallocation of US foreign aid so that the militarization of the Middle East is constrained; making positive contributions to groups and partners committed to the non-violent resolution of the conflict; challenging the practices of corporations that gain from the continuation of the conflict; and divesting from those companies that refuse to change their practice of gain from the perpetuation of violence, including the Occupation";¹⁵ and

WHEREAS despite years of corporate engagement and the submission of shareholder resolutions from United Church Funds¹⁶ and other religious and secular groups, few companies have withdrawn any of their operations that support the Occupation; and

WHEREAS Jewish groups in the US such as Jewish Voice for Peace¹⁷ and American Jews for a Just Peace-Boston¹⁸ as well as Israeli groups such as the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions¹⁹ and Coalition of Women for Peace²⁰ support the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement against the Israeli Occupation;

STATEMENT:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 2014 Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ authorizes the Board of Directors of the Conference to submit a resolution to the 30th General Synod of the United Church of Christ which:

CALLS upon the churches and church members to study the Kairos Palestine document and take heed of its call for solidarity with the Palestinian people;²¹ and

CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Board, United Church of Christ Pension Boards, United Church Funds, Conferences, local churches, members, and other related United Church of Christ entities to divest any holdings in companies profiting from the occupation of the Palestinian Territories by the state of Israel, including, but not limited to, Caterpillar Inc, Motorola Solutions, Hewlett-Packard Development Company LP, G4S, and Veolia Environment and its subsidiaries;²² and

CALLS upon all entities of the church to boycott goods produced by Israeli companies in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including, but not limited to, Ahava skin care products,²³ SodaStream products,²⁴ and Hadiklaim dates,²⁵ and upon church members to join boycotts in their local communities; and

CALLS upon the UCC Collegium Officers and church members to request Congress to investigate whether US military aid given to Israel violates US laws, specifically, the US Foreign Assistance Act and the US Arms Export Control Act;²⁶ and

CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Board to monitor the implementation of this resolution by all national UCC entities and to ensure that those who manage the United Church Board's own invested funds and provide United Church Board employee health and pension benefits are in compliance with the resolution; and

ASKS the General Minister and President to provide an annual report to the whole church on the implementation of this resolution.

The funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available, and the Collegium of Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ will determine the implementing body.

Note: to link to these footnote sites go to UCC Palestine-Israel Network web site: <uccpalestineisraelnetwork.org> Select "Our Resolution" and scroll down to footnotes. Click on selected footnote link addresses.

1. <http://www.kairopalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>
2. "General Synod pronouncement and proposal for action on the United Church of Christ as a 'Just Peace Church,' " [//www.ucc.org/beliefs/theology/general-synod-pronouncement.html](http://www.ucc.org/beliefs/theology/general-synod-pronouncement.html)
3. "The Israeli Palestinian Conflict,"
<http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-toisraelpalestine/1987-ip-resolution.html>
4. "Consequences of the Persian Gulf War for a Just Peace Church,"
<http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-to-israelpalestine/1991-gulf-warresolution.html>
5. "The Middle East," <http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-toisraelpalestine/1989-mid-east-resolution.html>
6. "Palestine/Israel," <http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-toisraelpalestine/1997-palestine-israel-resol.html>
7. Resolution: Anti-Semitism, Minutes of the Twenty-third General Synod, pp. 11-12,
<http://www.ucc.org/assets/pdfs/synod/g23.pdf>
8. <http://uccfiles.com/synod/resolutions/Resolution-On-Actions-of-Hostility-Against-Islam.pdf> (2011)

9. Annual Report, B'Tselem, "Human Rights in the Occupied Territories 2011," http://www.btselem.org/annual_report_2011 and UN Human Rights Council Session 12, "Human Rights in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories," <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/12session/A-HRC-12-48.pdf>
10. Palestinian Center for Human Rights, <http://www.pchrgaza.org/portal/en/>
11. "Background on East Jerusalem," B'Tselem, www.btselem.org/jerusalem
12. <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/study-israel-leads-in-ignoring-security-council-resolutions-1.31971> and <http://www.ifamericansknew.org/stat/un.html>
13. Advisory Opinion, International Court of Justice, 9 July 2004, Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, <http://www.icjci.org/docket/index.php?pr=71&code=mwp&p1=3&p2=4&p3=6>
14. "A moment of truth: A word of faith, hope, and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering," Kairos Palestine, 2009, <http://www.kairospalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>
15. <http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-to-israelpalestine/2005-economicleverage.html>
16. United Church Funds, "UCF Mideast Engagements," <http://ucfunds.org/social-responsibility/corporateengagement/economic-leverage/promoting-peace/united-church-funds-engagements/>
17. www.jvp.org
18. www.ajjpboston.org
19. <http://icahdusa.org/an-open-letter-from-jeff-halper/>
20. <http://www.coalitionofwomen.org/>

21. The document, together with a study guide, Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth, prepared by the Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (USA), can be viewed here: http://fosna.org/files/fosna/Kairos_StudyGuide_2011_6_FOSNA_Color.pdf and ordered here: <http://store.pcusa.org/2646610001>

22. www.whoprofits.org and <https://wedivest.org/>

23. <http://www.codepink4peace.org/section.php?id=415>

24. <http://sodastreamboycott.org>

25. <http://whoprofits.org/company/hadiklaim-israel-date-growers-cooperative>.

26. Letter dated October 5, 2012 from religious leaders asking Congress to investigate whether US military aid to Israel complies with US law.

http://www.uccpalestineisraelnetwork.org/Church_Leaders_Letter_to_Congress.pdf

**A PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE RESOLUTION OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS
REGARDING THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT**

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SUBMITTED on August 8, 2014

CONTACT: Rev. John Buttrick and Rev. Faye Buttrick (buttrickf1@att.net)

IMPLEMENTING BODY: The Board of Directors of the NH Conference UCC is asked to submit this resolution to the 30th General Synod of the United Church of Christ in accordance with the UCC's designated deadlines and guidelines for submitting such resolutions.

ANTICIPATED COSTS: None

DIRECTIONAL STATEMENTS AND GOALS: None