

1 **RESOLUTION OF WITNESS REGARDING THE ISRAELI-**
2 **PALESTINIAN CONFLICT**

3
4 **Presented by the Steering Committee of the United Church of Christ**
5 **Palestine Israel Network**

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

20
21 Therefore, in the spirit of the ancient prophets and the ministry of
22 Jesus, we offer this resolution:

23
24 WHEREAS in 1985 the Fifteenth General Synod of the United Church of
25 Christ committed itself to be a Just Peace Church;² and

26
27 WHEREAS historically the UCC has affirmed Israel’s right to exist within
28 secure and internationally recognized boundaries (GS 16[1987],³ GS
29 18[1991]),⁴ and asserted the rights of Palestinians to enjoy sovereignty
30 in an independent, contiguous, and viable state of their own, within
31 secure and recognized boundaries (GS 16 [1987], GS 17[1989])⁵ & GS
32 18[1991]; and

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

38
39 WHEREAS the UCC is deeply committed to interfaith relationships and
40 General Synods have confessed to the sin of anti-Semitism and
41 proclaimed its renunciation (GS 23 [2001]);⁷ and have denounced
42 actions against Islam or Muslims based on ignorance or fear (GS 28
43 [2011]);⁸ and

44
45 WHEREAS the UCC values its relationships with Jewish groups in the US
46 who have differing perspectives on the conflict and with Jewish Israeli
47 peace activists who have sought justice, equality and freedom for both
48 peoples; and

49
50 WHEREAS Palestinians in the West Bank have lived since 1967 under
51 Israeli military occupation which subjects them to many human rights
52 abuses including; loss of their land for the purpose of building Israeli
53 settlements; limited access to their land and to each other due to the
54 route of the Separation Wall on Occupied Palestinian Territory; being
55 systematically pushed into small, non-contiguous geographic enclaves
56 separated by barriers and checkpoints; gross inequality in the amount
57 of water allocated to them; severe and arbitrary travel restrictions;
58 limited access to holy sites; segregated roads; the demolition of homes;
59 destruction of their crops by settlers and the Israeli army; arbitrary
60 arrest, including the arrest of children;⁹ and

61
62 WHEREAS the Israeli government subjects Palestinians in Gaza to:
63 military attacks using disproportionately overwhelming force; severe
64 limits on personal entry and on the entry of products essential to
65 Gazans' well-being; a six mile fishing limit in violation of international

66 law; strict Israeli control of electronic communications, air and sea
67 space, and destruction of Gaza’s infrastructure, and economy;¹⁰ and
68 WHEREAS Israel has annexed Palestinian East Jerusalem and separated
69 it from the West Bank and Gaza and continues to appropriate
70 Palestinian properties there for Jewish settlements and to deny
71 building permits to Palestinians, as well as revoking the residency rights
72 of many of its Palestinian citizens there;¹¹ and

73
74 WHEREAS Israel refuses to end its occupation of territory conquered in
75 the 1967 War, leading to numerous illegal actions and human rights
76 abuses there by the Israeli government and military in defiance of
77 United Nations resolutions¹², and Israel refuses to respect the 4th
78 Geneva Convention as called for by the International Court of Justice in
79 its opinion concerning the Separation Wall in the Occupied Palestinian
80 Territory;¹³ and

81 WHEREAS our Palestinian Christian partners, seeking an alternative to
82 violence born of hopelessness and despair, have called on their global
83 partners to engage in non- violent measures pressuring Israel to end its
84 occupation, *Kairos Palestine 2009- ‘A Moment of Truth’: A Word of
85 Faith, Hope, and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering*;¹⁴ and

86 WHEREAS the resolution “Concerning the Use of Economic Leverage in
87 Promoting Peace in the Middle East,” passed by the General Synod in
88 2005, called upon “the Covenanted Ministries, Pension Boards, United
89 Church Foundation, local churches and members to use economic
90 leverage, including, but not limited to: advocating the reallocation of US
91 foreign aid so that the militarization of the Middle East is constrained;
92 making positive contributions to groups and partners committed to the
93 non-violent resolution of the conflict; challenging the practices of
94 corporations that gain from the continuation of the conflict; and
95 divesting from those companies that refuse to change their practice of
96 gain from the perpetuation of violence, including the Occupation”;¹⁵
97 and

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

102 WHEREAS Jewish groups in the US such as Jewish Voice for Peace¹⁷ and
103 American Jews for a Just Peace-Boston¹⁸ as well as Israeli groups such
104 as the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions¹⁹ and Coalition of
105 Women for Peace²⁰ support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
106 Movement against the Israeli Occupation;

107 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 2014 Annual Meeting of the
108 Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ authorizes
109 the Board of Directors of the Conference to submit a resolution to the
110 30th General Synod of the United Church of Christ meeting in
111 Cleveland, Ohio, which:

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

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

122

123 CALLS upon all national entities of the church to boycott goods
124 produced by Israeli companies in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,
125 including, but not limited to, Ahava²³ skin care products, SodaStream
126 products,²⁴ and Hadiklaim dates²⁵; and upon church members to join
127 boycotts in their local communities; and

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

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

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

Please refer to comment from the Central Atlantic Conference regarding this resolution

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-to-israelpalestine/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-war-resolution.html>

⁵ “The Middle East,” <http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-to-israelpalestine/1989-mid-east-resolution.html>

⁶ “Palestine/Israel,” <http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-to-israelpalestine/1997-palestine-israel-resol.html>

⁷ Minutes of the Twenty-third General Synod, “*Resolution: Anti-Semitism*,” 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 <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.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?pr=71&code=mwp&p1=3&p2=4&p3=6>

¹⁴ <http://www.kairopalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-to-israelpalestine/2005-economic-leverage.html>

¹⁶ United Church Funds, “*UCF Mideast Engagements*,” <http://ucfunds.org/social-responsibility/corporate-engagement/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 <http://www.kairopalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>

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 from religious leaders asking Congress to condition Israel military aid on human rights compliance dated October 5, 2012.

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