Resolution Report

A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward A Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

“Therefore be it Resolved” section:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Thirtieth General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

CALLS upon United Church of Christ churches and church members to study thoughtfully the Kairos Palestine document, as well as other perspectives on the occupied Palestinian territories, to reflect upon the theological truths within the Kairos Palestine document, and to take heed of its call for non-violent measures pressuring Israel to end the occupation in solidarity with the Palestinian people suffering under occupation;

CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Board, the Pension Boards – United Church of Christ, Inc., United Church Funds, conferences, local churches, members, and other related United Church of Christ entities to divest any direct or substantive indirect holdings in companies profiting from or complicit in human rights violations arising from the occupation of the Palestinian Territories by the state of Israel, including, but not limited to, Caterpillar, Inc., Motorola Solutions, Hewlett-Packard Company, G4S, and Veolia Environmental and its subsidiaries until such time as these companies no longer profit from or are complicit in said human rights violations;

URGES the United Church of Christ Board, soliciting input from stakeholders in this issue, to develop and publish standards by which faith-driven investment, divestment, and re-investment decisions will be made in the future;

CALLS upon all entities of the United Church of Christ to boycott goods identified as produced in or using the facilities of illegal settlements located in the occupied Palestinian territories, including, but not limited to, Ahava skin care products, SodaStream products, and Hadiklaim dates, and upon church members to join boycotts of such goods in their local communities; and for such boycotts to end when these companies cease operations in the illegal settlements;

CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Officers and church members to persist in the request to Congress, previously made by a number of religious leaders, to ensure that the U.S. aid to Israel violates neither the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, which prohibits assistance to any country that engages in a consistent pattern of human rights violations nor the U.S. Arms Export Control Act, which limits the use of U.S. weapons to “internal security” or “legitimate self-defense”,

COMMENDS United Church of Christ leadership for continuing to dialogue with major Jewish organizations and call for United Church of Christ-wide participations in a rigorous dialogue among the three Abrahamic faiths at all levels – in particular between local congregations – that will be resources with materials for the Wider Church Global Ministries Middle East and Europe office in order to identify ways in which groups of congregations of different faiths can work in
concert to promote sacred reconciliation among all people who are affected by the conflict in the Middle East and to influence public policies in ways that will promote peace and social justice for Palestinians and Israelis and end violence in all its forms;

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

ASKS the General Minister and President to provide an annual report to the whole church on the implementation of this resolution, including a summary of interfaith dialogue at various levels, along with examples of interfaith, congregation-to-congregation peace efforts.

Covenant Partners who participated in fulfilling the terms of the resolution:

Wider Church Ministries

Justice and Witness Ministries

UCC Board

United Church Funds

UCC Pension Boards

Central Atlantic, Maine, Minnesota, Pacific Northwest, Penn West, and Southwest Conferences

[This report highlights actions by the national setting of the UCC only, and not affiliated ministries, conferences, or local churches. A full report of actions taken by all of these various named settings, as submitted to General Synod in 2017, is available online here: http://uccfiles.com/synod/gs2017-TowardaJustPeaceRevised.pdf].

Actions taken in support of the resolution:

Study thoughtfully the *Kairos Palestine* document:

- Global Ministries promotes and provides resources related to the *Kairos Palestine* document
- 2016 webinar on *Kairos Palestine* document as part of Global Ministries Middle East Initiative

UCC Board to develop and publish standards by which faith-driven investment, divestment, and re-investment decisions will be made:

- Human rights screens and responsible investing guidelines developed by UC Funds Board and adopted by UCC Board

Boycott goods identified as produced in or using the facilities of illegal settlement in the occupied Palestinian territories
- Nov 2016 action alert on PayPal with United Church of Canada
- May 2016 Witness for Justice contribution “Of Blessings and Boycotts”
- Sept 2016 Ecumenical statement of a joint NCC/WCC consultation on Palestine/Israel in which the UCC participated

Action alerts to Congress on US aid to Israel:

- Aug 2015 JPANet alert asking for human rights hearings on US aid to Israel
- Economic leverage action
- Feb 2016 and Dec 2015 ecumenical letters to the Administration and State Dept regarding Israeli violations of human rights and adherence to the US Leahy Law
- May 2016 ecumenical statement calling for Congress to end military aid to countries in the Middle East and enact an arms embargo to the region, proposing bolstered diplomatic and developmental efforts instead
- Feb 2017 ecumenical letter to Congress and the President on Israel/Palestine including a call for the application of Leahy Law vetting process

Continuing to dialogue with major Jewish organizations and call for rigorous dialogue among the three Abrahamic faiths:

- National Council of Churches – National Council of Synagogues table on Pastoral issues discussion in Nov 2016 about issues related to Israel/Palestine
- Resources have been prepared for the interpretation of this resolution: “What the UCC General Synod Adopted on ‘Just Peace in Israel/Palestine’” and “FAQs on the resolution”

Other:

- June 2016 Collegium statement defending economic leverage as a First Amendment right
- Global Ministries has facilitated several trips of UCC leadership to Israel/Palestine including a trip with UCC PB and UCF leadership to engage in questions of economic leverage/investment/divestment
- April 2016 participation in the Atlanta summit at the Carter Center bringing together Palestinian and US church leaders
- December 2017 action alert regarding the decision to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem
- October 2018 ecumenical statement regarding the Trump Administration’s stance towards Israel and its reversal of decades of US policy
- Dec 2018 and Feb 2019 action alerts regarding the Israel Anti-Boycott Act introduced in Congress and affirming the right to use economic leverage

Impact of the actions:

- Increased education and awareness
- Growth of local I-P networks and Palestine-Israel Networks

Possibilities for future action:
There remain many possibilities for future action as the occupation of Palestinian territories by the state of Israel has not ended. New companies and goods are being identified for divestment, boycott, and/or reinvestment. In addition, as 27 state legislatures and Congress (both the Senate and the House of Representatives) have either adopted or are considering laws criminalizing or restricting participation and/or support of aspects of boycott, divestment, and/or sanctions as they relate to Israel/Palestine, there are many opportunities to voice opposition to such legislation as a violation of First Amendment rights, and lifting up historical church use of economic measures to promote justice in a variety of cases. The issue of the use of economic measures in the case of Israel/Palestine remains front and center. Education, advocacy, and action are needed now as ever.