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**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ calls for boycott and divestment from companies that profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian Territories

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Pendleton, Oregon – The Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ has adopted a resolution calling for boycott and divestment from companies that profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian Territories. The resolution, which calls on church members and church financial bodies to boycott and divest, was adopted overwhelmingly (101 in favor, 11 opposed, 2 abstentions) by delegates to the Annual Meeting of the Central Pacific Conference on September 26-28.

The Central Pacific Conference is the fourth Conference (or “local region”) of the United Church of Christ to pass a resolution for boycott and divestment of companies profiting from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian Territories. Previously the New York Conference, the Central Atlantic Conference and the Northern California Conference passed similar resolutions. The Central Pacific Conference includes 49 individual churches located throughout Oregon, northern Idaho and southern Washington.

The resolution calls for divestment of specific companies which, after years of engagement and dialogue by the United Church of Christ and other denominational and humanitarian organizations, continue to profit from the illegal military occupation of Palestinian Territories:

- **Caterpillar, Inc.**, whose bulldozers are used for the systematic demolition of Palestinian homes, civilian infrastructure, and agricultural fields and orchards, to pave the way for settlement expansion and Israeli-only roads throughout the West Bank of Palestine.
- **Motorola Solutions**, which provides radar surveillance systems for illegal Israeli settlements, checkpoints and military camps in Palestine's West Bank.
- **G4S**, which provides security services for Israeli prisons where Palestinian children as young as 12 years of age are routinely (and illegally) incarcerated, abused, threatened and forced to sign coerced confessions.
- **Hewlett-Packard Company**, which provides biometric ID systems at Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank which deprive Palestinians of freedom of movement in their own land.
- **Veolia Environment**, which transports and dumps waste from within Israel and from illegal settlements into the West Bank of Palestine, in violation of international law.

Likewise, the resolution calls for boycott of products produced by Israeli companies in the occupied Palestinian Territories, including **SodaStream** home carbonated drink systems, **Ahava Dead Sea** skin care products, and **Hadiklaim** dates.

Advocates for the resolution explained that their Palestinian Christian partners – the Christian leaders of Palestine – have issued a clarion call for boycott and divestment. Their 2009 document called “*Kairos-Palestine – A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering*” calls on the global church and others to engage in boycott and divestment as forms of non-violent pressure. Likewise 171 Palestinian civic organizations - political parties, unions, associations, coalitions and organizations - have similarly issued a call for non-violent forms of pressure.

This week's resolution is but the latest in a number of resolutions and actions by the United Church of Christ aimed at bringing peace to Palestine and Israel. In 1985, the United Church of Christ committed itself to be a Just Peace Church. In 2005 the United Church of Christ adopted a resolution supporting “economic leverage” to promote peace in the Middle East. In 2012 the senior elected officers of the United Church of Christ – the Collegium of Ministers – issued an Advent Pastoral Letter asking members not to buy products which contribute to the denial of Palestinian people's rights to livelihood, land, and property.

Full Text of the Resolution

Here is the full text of the resolution adopted this weekend by the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ. Links to references are also provided.

The Central Pacific Conference Palestine Israel Network, Bethel UCC, Kairos Milwaukie UCC, Zion UCC, CPC Justice and Witness Ministries, and CPC Wider Church Ministries call upon the Central Pacific Conference to endorse this RESOLUTION OF WITNESS REGARDING THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT and to recommend adoption of this resolution by the 30th General Synod.

RESOLUTION OF WITNESS REGARDING THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Presented by

The Steering Committee of the United Church of Christ Palestine Israel Network

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 the Kairos Palestine Document, “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)ⁱ

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

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

WHEREAS historically the UCC has affirmed Israel’s right to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries (GS 16[1987],ⁱⁱⁱ GS 18[1991]),^{iv} 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])^v & GS 18[1991]; and

WHEREAS 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]);^{vi} and

WHEREAS 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]);^{vii} and have denounced actions against Islam or Muslims based on ignorance or fear (GS 28 [2011]);^{viii} and

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 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, non-contiguous geographic enclaves separated by barriers and checkpoints; gross inequality in the amount of water allocated to them; severe and arbitrary travel restrictions; limited access to holy sites; segregated roads; the demolition of homes; destruction of their crops by settlers and the Israeli army; arbitrary arrest, including the arrest of children,^{ix} and

WHEREAS the Israeli government subjects Palestinians in Gaza to: military attacks using disproportionately overwhelming force; severe limits on personal entry and on 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 and sea space, and destruction of Gaza's infrastructure, and economy;^x and

WHEREAS Israel has annexed Palestinian East Jerusalem and separated it from the West Bank and Gaza and continues to appropriate Palestinian properties there for Jewish settlements and to deny building permits to Palestinians, as well as revoking the residency rights of many of its Palestinian citizens there,^{xi} 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^{xii}, and Israel refuses to respect the 4th Geneva Convention as called for by the International Court of Justice in its opinion concerning the Separation Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;^{xiii} and

WHEREAS 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, Kairos Palestine 2009-'A Moment of Truth': A Word of Faith, Hope, and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering;^{xiv} 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";^{xv} and

WHEREAS despite years of corporate engagement and the submission of shareholder resolutions from United Church Funds^{xvi} 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 Peace^{xvii} and American Jews for a Just Peace-Boston^{xviii} as well as Israeli groups such as the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions^{xix} and Coalition of Women for Peace^{xx} support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement against the Israeli Occupation;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ endorses this RESOLUTION OF WITNESS REGARDING THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT and recommends the adoption of this resolution by the 30th General Synod:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Thirtieth General Synod:

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 and the Israeli people who are working for peace;^{xxi} and

CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Collegium Officers and church members to call for an end to violence in all its forms, to continue to pray for peace, and to invite all members of the United Church of Christ to build relationships with Jewish, Muslim and Christian Palestinians and Israelis; 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 that, after careful consideration, are found to profit from the occupation of the Palestinian Territories by the state of Israel, specifically including Caterpillar Inc., Motorola Solutions, Hewlett-Packard Development Company LP, G4S, and Veolia Environment and its subsidiaries;^{xxii} 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,^{xxiii} SodaStream products,^{xxiv} and Hadiklaim dates^{xxv}; 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;^{xxvi} and

CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Board to monitor the implementation of this resolution by all UCC national 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.

ⁱ <http://www.kairospalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>

ⁱⁱ “General Synod pronouncement and proposal for action on the United Church of Christ as a ‘Just Peace Church,’ ” <http://www.ucc.org/beliefs/theology/general-synod-pronouncement.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ “The Israeli Palestinian Conflict,” <http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-to-israelpalestine/1987-ip-resolution.html>

^{iv} “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>

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

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

^{vii} Minutes of the Twenty-third General Synod, “*Resolution: Anti-Semitism*,” pp. 11-12, <http://www.ucc.org/assets/pdfs/synod/g23.pdf>

^{viii} <http://uccfiles.com/synod/resolutions/Resolution-On-Actions-of-Hostility-Against-Islam.pdf> (2011)

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- ^{ix} 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>
- ^x <http://www.pchrgaza.org/portal/en/>
- ^{xi} “Background on East Jerusalem,” B’Tselem, www.btselem.org/jerusalem
- ^{xii} <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/study-israel-leads-in-ignoring-security-councilresolutions-1.31971> and <http://www.ifamericansknew.org/stat/un.html>
- ^{xiii} 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>
- ^{xiv} <http://www.kairopalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>
- ^{xv} <http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-to-israelpalestine/2005-economic-leverage.html>
- ^{xvi} United Church Funds, “*UCF Mideast Engagements*,” <http://ucfunds.org/social-responsibility/corporate-engagement/economic-leverage/promoting-peace/united-church-funds-engagements/>
- ^{xvii} www.jvp.org
- ^{xviii} <http://www.ajpboston.org/home/>
- ^{xix} <http://icahdusa.org/an-open-letter-from-jeff-halper/>
- ^{xx} <http://www.coalitionofwomen.org/>
- ^{xxi} <http://www.kairopalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>
- ^{xxii} www.whoprofits.org and <https://wedivest.org/>
- ^{xxiii} <http://www.codepink4peace.org/section.php?id=415>
- ^{xxiv} <http://sodastreamboycott.org>
- ^{xxv} <http://whoprofits.org/company/hadiklaim-israel-date-growers-cooperative>
- ^{xxvi} 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