



The Kairos Moment Now: Toward a Human Rights Approach to a Just Peace in Palestine

Summer 2019

A Statement by the United Church of Christ Palestine Israel Network (UCC PIN)

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We urge the international community to stand with the Palestinian people in their struggle against oppression, displacement, and apartheid.

We demand that all people, political leaders and decision-makers put pressure on Israel and take legal measures in order to oblige its government to end its oppression and disregard for international law.

~Christmas Alert, Kairos Palestine 2018

Fundamental Palestinian rights are not negotiable: the right to freedom from occupation and colonization, the right to full equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel, and the right of refugees to return to their homes and properties. At this stage of the struggle for Palestinian self-determination, when Israel has passed a Nation State Bill that declares: (1) Israel to be a Jewish state and (2) only Israel has the right to self-determination; and where there is no sustainable political solution in sight, the United Church of Christ Palestine Israel Network believes that the reality of Israel's apartheid state, now fully exposed by the Nation State Law, requires use of the legal and analytical framework of apartheid if decolonization, genuine self-determination and full equality are to be actualized.

We continue to advocate for the end of Israel's military occupation. That goal is necessary, but we also recognize that it is not sufficient to achieve a just and sustainable peace. Ending the occupation does not address the needs of Palestinians within the 1948 borders who are citizens of Israel in name, but are not granted equal rights. Hence the imperative to use the framework of apartheid. As Richard Falk, former Special Rapporteur for Occupied Palestinian Territories of the United Nations Human Rights Council says, "The weight of international law now clearly mandates that the negotiation of a sustainable peace depends on the prior disavowal and abandonment of the apartheid regime that Israel relies upon to subjugate the Palestinian people."

The Kairos Moment now requires United Church of Christ support for the proposed Synod Resolution on Global Forced Migration. Among the 68.5 million refugees around the globe are generations of Palestinians who have been displaced and dispossessed of their homes and properties. More than five million of the Palestinian refugees are registered with the United

Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA). The Resolution calls us to support the restoration of US funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees and to stand against any US policy that attempts to limit the definition of refugees only to those of 1948. With this resolution, we support our Global Ministries partners in their call to support the rights accorded all refugees as articulated in UN General Assembly Resolution 194.

The Kairos Moment now demands we, as the United Church of Christ, strengthen our commitment to live into our past General Synod resolutions with greater diligence and follow through. We, as UCC PIN, urge your support for the 2017 General Synod Resolution: A Call for the United Church of Christ to Advocate for the Rights of Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation, and we encourage you to use the How Are the Children video curriculum (www.hatcnw.org) developed by UCC PIN. We also endorse Representative Betty McCollum's new bill, H.R. #2407, calling for the end of military aid to Israel if US funds are being used to support crimes against children in violation of the UN's 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child. We urge your advocacy for this critical legislation.

The Kairos Moment now also requires us to reaffirm support for the 2015 General Synod Resolution: A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict which called upon the UCC to use economic leverage – boycotting products made in Israel's illegal West Bank settlements, divesting from corporations profiting from the Occupation, and encouraging US sanctions against Israel – in order to pressure Israel to comply with international law. Compliance requires ending the 51-year-old “belligerent” military occupation, the illegal Gaza Blockade, the recent annexation of the Golan Heights, and the designation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

In addition to living more deeply into our own resolutions, it is imperative to give our utmost attention to Israel's Nation State bill. Its passage in August 2018 makes clear the necessity for and accuracy of the apartheid framework. In the bill, Israel has declared itself a Jewish state and has stated that only Israeli Jews have the right to self-determination. The bill enshrines the new US position of naming Jerusalem the capital of Israel, and it removes Arabic as an official language of the state. With this bill Israel (with the support of our own U.S. government) has crossed a red line. This Kairos Moment now requires our vigilance, attention, and clarion calls for respecting the human rights of all Palestinians.

With the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in one hand and, in the other, our Christian values that support the dignity of all in the image of God, we also stand against any move to further annex Palestinian land in the West Bank and support the UCC and our ecumenical and mission partners in condemning any such movement or action.

We, the United Church of Christ Palestine Israel Network, recommend that the Church not advocate for any one particular solution, whether two-state or one-state or something else. We believe that Palestinians have the right to determine their own sovereignty and that our attention and work should stay centered on the defense of human rights and on international humanitarian law. Further, in concert with our mission partners, we condemn any peace plan that does not propose a political solution that, at the outset, ends Israel's efforts to erase Palestine through ongoing colonization and military occupation.

Finally, we call upon members and congregations of the United Church of Christ to recognize that a system of apartheid, as defined by the United Nations, exists in Palestine and Israel, an oppressive and illegal regime sustained by Israel's military occupation of the West Bank and blockade of Gaza, and supported by massive financial and political support from the United States. Only through resistance to apartheid through human rights-based advocacy, prophetic witness, economic leverage, and prayer can we as Christians fulfill the demands of justice and contribute to peace with justice for all.

General Synod's long history of Resolutions on Israel/ Palestine

- [1979 General Synod Resolution: Overture on Consultation on the Future of the City of Jerusalem](#)
- [1993 General Synod Resolution: Urging Reopening of East Jerusalem](#)
- [1997 General Synod Resolution: Jerusalem City of Life](#)
- [1997 General Synod Resolution: Palestine/Israel](#)
- [2003 General Synod Resolution: An Alternative Voice to Christian Zionism](#)
- [2005 General Synod Resolution: Concerning Use of Economic Leverage in Promoting Peace in the Middle East](#)
- [2005 General Synod Resolution: Tear Down the Wall](#)
- [2007 Executive Council action on referred resolution "In Support of a Renewed and Balanced Study and Response to the Conflict Between Palestine and Israel"](#)
- [2013 Executive Council action on reports of implementation of 2005 "Economic Leverage" resolution](#)
- [2015 General Synod Resolution: A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#)
- [2017 General Synod Resolution: A Call for the United Church of Christ to Advocate for the Rights of Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation.](#)