

Regarding Israeli Occupation of Palestinian Lands and Israel's Apartheid Policies toward Palestinian People

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Resolved, That the 186th Convention of the Diocese of Vermont support the rule of international law and condemn the ongoing occupation of Palestinian lands that is illegal and in direct violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242; and be it further

Resolved, That the Convention support the right of Palestinians to self-determination, freedom of movement, property rights, unrestricted access to water, electricity, medical care, primary and secondary education, economic opportunities, permission to build and retain homes, and commerce; and be it further

Resolved, That the Convention urge members of The Episcopal Church in Vermont to pray, reflect and openly discuss how the policies of the Israeli government toward Palestinians *may* contribute to a state of militarization and apartheid, and whether such conditions are consistent with our Baptismal Covenant to strive for human dignity and freedom for all people in the region.

EXPLANATION:

A. The Episcopal Church through our General Convention has supported the protection of human rights for Palestinians over the course of three decades, including:

The 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church called upon Israel to secure the human rights of indigenous Arabs within Israel and Palestinian territories through a) ending the violation of civil and human rights; b) stopping the brutalities committed against individuals, families, and groups which now occur; c) restricting the use of military force to measures and practices proportionate to the situation and suited to the control of civilian populations; d) causing the State of Israel to discontinue the use of administrative detention and collective punishment; e) the permanent reopening of schools, universities, and other educational institutions for Palestinians in the occupied territories; f) causing the State of Israel to be even handed and fair in the recognition and enforcement of the rights and interests of Palestinians with respect to their personal safety, property rights, water rights, and rights of access to commercial markets; and g) reestablishing and safe-guarding the City of Jerusalem as an inter-religious municipality in which full respect is accorded the rights and interests of Christians, Jews, and Muslims (Resolution 1991-A147).

The 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church recognized that Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip and the occupied territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem are illegal under international law (United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, Nov. 22, 1967) and an obstacle to peace (Resolution 1994-D065).

The 73rd General Convention of the Episcopal Church affirmed the right of Palestinians and Israelis to self-determination, independence, and sovereignty based in justice, peace, and security for the two peoples (Resolution 2000-B016).

The 79th General Convention of 2018 discussed and voted on D039 regarding Occupation and Apartheid. The resolution was passed by the House of Deputies and rejected by the House of Bishops.

B. The Episcopal Church through its General Convention has long supported its opposition to apartheid systems, as found in South Africa, including:

- 1) The Episcopal Church expressed its opposition when such conditions of apartheid as described above existed in South Africa (1976-D036).
- 2) The 68th General Convention of the Episcopal Church adopted a resolution calling for an unambiguous, coherent policy in opposition to apartheid in the Republic of South Africa (D029 – 1985).

C. The policies in place by the government of Israel constitute an apartheid system, as documented by independent objective studies. In particular, a study commissioned by the government of South Africa in 2009 examined the question: *Do Israel's practices in occupied Palestinian territory, namely the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, amount to the crimes of colonialism and apartheid under international law?*

An international team of legal and human rights scholars conducted a fifteen month study used the following criteria to determine their findings:

- **Definition of apartheid:** *Apartheid is defined as an institutional form of racism in which states enact laws which function as the apparatus to commit inhuman acts for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of person over any other racial group of person and systematically oppressing them. The practice of apartheid is a crime under international law.*
- **The 3 Pillars of Apartheid Regimes:**
 - The state codifies into law a preferred identity
 - The state segregated the population into geographic areas based on identity
 - The state establishes security laws and policies designed to suppress any opposition to the regime

This commissioned group published their findings in a pamphlet entitled, “Is Israel an Apartheid State?” This study commissioned by the South African government was published by the organization, *If Americans Knew*, in 2009. The aim of this project was to scrutinize the situation from a nonpartisan perspective of international law, rather than engage in political discourse and rhetoric.

Using these criteria, the South African study concluded that “Israel, since 1967, is the belligerent Occupying Power in occupied Palestinian territory, and that its occupation of these territories has become a colonial enterprise which implements a system of apartheid.

(The full study is posted at: http://www.hsrc.ac.za_Media_Release-378.phtml)

Another publication that analyzes Israel's apartheid policy is Jimmy Carter's 2007 book, Palestinian Peace not Apartheid. This book was denounced by the Israeli lobby as anti-Semitic for denouncing the ongoing racist apartheid policies of Israel.

D. Current actions by the state of Israel continue to violate international law and illustrate its perpetuation of the unjust system of apartheid.

Currently in 2018, the Israeli government continues its oppression of Palestinians and suppression of those that support elimination of its system of apartheid, as recently demonstrated by its action to deny entry into Israel to individuals and organizations protesting its apartheid policies and laws.

On July 19, 2018, the Knesset passed The Nation-State bill wherein Israel would be defined as the nation state of the Jewish people and the right to self determination in Israel would be unique to the Jewish people, a direct example of Pillar 1 of an apartheid regime as defined above.