

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2022-D024

Title: Conditioning U.S. Military Assistance on Human Rights

Proposer: Ms. Karma Quick-Panwala

Topic: Human Rights

Directly Related: (Attached)

- 2018-B013 Call for Governmental Response and Humanitarian Relief to the Crisis in Yemen
- 2018-D027 Call on US Government to Cooperate with Investigations into Israeli and Palestinian Human Rights Violations
- 2018-D068 Develop Social Responsible Investment Criteria for Guidance
- 2012-A015 Commend Democratic Movements and Request Foreign Aid Accountability
- 2009-A032 Urge an End to Human Rights Violations in the Philippines
- 1994-D015 Reaffirm Support for Human Rights
- 1991-A149 Urge a Full Accounting of the Use of Foreign Aid in the Middle East

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

- 2018-B016 Develop Investment Criteria for Israel and Palestine Based on a Human Rights Screen
- 2018-D024 Urge Continued Support for the Episcopal Churches of Sudan and South Sudan to Strengthen Peace
- 1985-D068 Urge Observance of the Helsinki Accords on Human Rights
- 1976-D036 Support Efforts by Church, Government and Business to End Apartheid

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2018, selecting "direct" resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The "direct" resolutions are attached and "indirect" resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#) or call 800-525-9329.

D024 - Conditioning U.S. Military Assistance on Human Rights

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Ms. Karma Quick-Panwala

Endorsed by: Ms. Sarah Lawton, Ms. Laura Russell

Requests New Interim Body: No

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

HiA: HD

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 08 - Social Justice & United States Policy

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the Episcopal Church reaffirm its longstanding commitment to supporting human rights in our own countries and around the world, and to ensuring that U.S. military assistance and arms sales not be used to perpetuate conflict, violate human rights, or contribute to corruption, instability, or violence; and be it further

Resolved, that the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations and Episcopal Public Policy Network support policies to oppose U.S. government military assistance, including the sale or provision of arms and related technologies such as surveillance equipment, to countries that have demonstrated well-documented, persistent, and egregious human rights abuses or severe corruption contributing to instability and conflict, and work to ensure that the United States government is not playing a role in furthering violent conflicts.

Explanation

The Episcopal Church has a long history of raising our voice on human rights issues to urge the U.S. government to take human rights into account in U.S. foreign policy. This resolution would extend our church's human rights commitments by reaffirming our longstanding basic commitments and by specifying that military aid and related technologies should always be conditioned on adherence to human rights norms.

It is already church policy to avoid investing church funds in military contractors and in companies doing business that are contributing to demonstrated, sustained human rights abuses, corruption, and conflict. In 2003, the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church adopted resolution EXC042003.18, “Divestment from Military Contractors,” which put in place a “policy of disinvestment from any company (a) among the top five U.S. defense contractors, measured in dollar volume of sales, and (b) any company among the top 50 defense contractors that receives more than fifty percent of its revenues from military contracts;” and in 2018, General Convention passed a resolution calling on the Executive Council’s Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility to develop a human rights screen for church investments, [i] which CCSR has done. [ii]

Although the U.S. government has also undertaken certain commitments in this area, through signing on to international commitments such as the Helsinki Accords and through the “Leahy Laws” and “Leahy Amendments” that are currently contained in the (amended) Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and in Department of Defense appropriations law, [iii] it does not always follow these commitments. Sustained advocacy and campaigning by civil society, including faith communities, has always been important in holding our governments to their own standards. The anti-apartheid movement is perhaps the best-known example, but there are other campaigns, for example, for ending the wars in Central America in the 1980s and for human rights in Darfur. We would not expect that the Episcopal Church alone can move U.S. policy on these issues, but we are able to join forces with other groups, including our ecumenical and interfaith, and international partners, to hold our government to a higher standard in upholding human rights.

Here is some background describing some of the Episcopal Church’s commitments in the area of human rights and advocacy with the U.S. government over several decades:

In 1985, the General Convention called upon “the U.S. State Department and the foreign ministries of all signatories to the Helsinki Accords to continue to link their nations’ future cooperation in economic, science, and technology transfer activities to improvements in human rights practices.” [iv]

In 1994-D015, “Reaffirm Support for Human Rights,” General Convention stated:

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention reaffirm its support for human rights throughout the world and states its conviction that civil rights and political freedom are the universal bedrock of any meaningful scheme of human rights; and be it further

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention commend ecumenical and interfaith support for human rights as a moral imperative for Christians, growing out of the biblical understandings that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, that they are endowed by God with an inalienable dignity, and that they thereby possess a value that is prior to and not dependent upon the acknowledgment of such rights by a political entity.” [v]

Additionally, the Episcopal Church has raised concerns about human rights issues in a number of specific regions and countries over many years, and has urged the U.S. government to use diplomatic means to support human rights. Some examples are: South

Africa during the apartheid era, [vi] a country that received overt U.S. military and technology assistance until the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 [vii] was passed under pressure from the anti-apartheid movement of which the Episcopal Church was a part; the Dominican Republic, specifically with regard to Haitian workers; [viii] Central America during the civil wars in the 1980s, [ix] which were funded and supplied by the U.S. government; Indonesia in 2000 in the midst of Muslim-Christian conflict; [x] the Philippines with regard to extra-judicial killings and disappearances, with a resolution specifically calling on the US government to withhold military aid from that country, in 2009; [xi] Sudan and South Sudan, addressing the ongoing civil war and armed conflict in the communities of Darfur and the Nuba Mountains; [xii] in Israel and in the Palestinian Territories, calling for independent investigations into the use of lethal force against civilians by Israeli and Palestinian authorities, and calling upon the U.S. government to enforce the Leahy Amendment prohibiting for foreign military units when human rights abuses have been credibly documented; [xiii] Iraq, expressing concern for religious and other minorities; [xiv] and Yemen, in response to the ongoing horrific conflict and humanitarian crisis there, calling upon the U.S. Government to observe the embargo of arms sales to all parties in the conflict, as called for by the United Nations. [xv]

[i] General Convention resolution 2018-B016, Episcopal Church Archives, Acts of Convention. https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2018-B016

[ii] Executive Council Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, Report to the 80th General Convention. <https://extranet.generalconvention.org/staff/files/download/29826>

[iii] "Leahy Law" Human Rights Provisions and Security Assistance: Issue Overview," by Nina M. Serafino, June S. Beittel, Lauren Ploch Blanchard, and Liana Rosen, by the Congressional Research Service, January 29, 2014. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R43361.pdf>

[iv] General Convention resolution 1985-D068, Episcopal Church Archives, Acts of Convention. https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=1985-D068

[v] General Convention resolution 1994-D015, Episcopal Church Archives, Acts of Convention. https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution-complete.pl?resolution=1994-D015

[vii] General Convention resolution 1976-D036, Episcopal Church Archives, Acts of Convention. https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=1976-D036

[viii] H.R.4868 - Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/99th-congress/house-bill/4868>

[viii] General Convention Resolution 1991-C054, Episcopal Church Archives, Acts of Convention. https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=1991-C054

[ix] General Convention Resolution 1985-A129, Episcopal Church Archives, Acts of Convention. https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=1985-A129

[x] General Convention Resolution 2000-B053, Episcopal Church Archives, Acts of Convention. https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2000-B053

[xi] General Convention Resolution 2009-A032, Episcopal Church Archives, Acts of Convention. https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2009-A032

[xii] General Convention Resolution 2018-D024, Episcopal Church Archives, Acts of Convention. https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2018-D024

[xiii] General Convention Resolution 2018-D027, Episcopal Church Archives, Acts of Convention. https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2018-D027

[xiv] General Convention Resolution 2018-D063, Episcopal Church Archives, Acts of Convention. https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2018-D063

[xv] General Convention Resolution 2018-B013, Episcopal Church Archives, Acts of Convention. https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2018-B013



Resolution Number:	2018-B013
Title:	Call for Governmental Response and Humanitarian Relief to the Crisis in Yemen
Legislative Action Taken:	Concurred as Amended
Final Text:	

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, as followers of Jesus Christ, recognize our moral imperative to address our deep concern and dismay over the ongoing conflict in Yemen, now in its fourth year, and the humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict, which has left 22 million people—three-quarters of the country's population—in need of humanitarian assistance including food and clean water; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church direct the Office of Government Relations to call upon the U.S. government: 1) to observe the embargo of arms sales to all parties in the conflict, as called for by the United Nations, and specifically to avoid supplying munitions, military equipment or technology that could be used in the conflict, as well as logistical and financial support for such transfers; 2) to call upon all parties to the conflict to allow unobstructed access in the conflict areas for humanitarian relief organizations, medical relief personnel, human rights investigators, and journalists; and 3) to express an urgent need for a politically negotiated solution; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church recognize that throughout the Middle East region access to water and sustainable agriculture are serious problems and a primary source of conflict; and encourage the Episcopal Church and Episcopal Relief and Development to undertake, in partnership with the Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, relief and long-term economic development projects in areas such as education, job creation, and health care, as well as sustainable solutions for the lack of access to water.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), p. 883.



Resolution Number: 2018-D027

Title: Call on US Government to Cooperate with Investigations into Israeli and Palestinian Human Rights Violations

Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended

Final Text:

Resolved, That in light of Israel's escalating indifference to international law and the rights of civilians under the Geneva Convention and other treaties, the General Convention call on the Congress and President of the United States to cooperate with calls by the United Nations for independent, transparent investigations into the use of lethal force against unarmed civilians by the Israeli Defense Force, as well as by Palestinian forces; and be it further

Resolved, That if information of human rights violations by military forces is corroborated, the General Convention stress the obligation of the US government to enforce the Leahy Amendment, which prohibits the USA from providing funds to foreign military units when human rights violations have been credibly identified; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention urge both Israeli and Palestinian governments to engage in non-violent methods of conflict resolution, using justice-seeking non-governmental groups in Israel-Palestine and beyond.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 1070-1071.



Resolution Number: 2018-D068

Title: Develop Social Responsible Investment Criteria for Guidance

Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended

Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention requests Executive Council to ask its Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility (CCSR), in consultation with, among others, those in the Church engaged with concerns for human rights and with concerns for the care of creation, to develop and propose to Executive Council for its review and adoption:

- (a) criteria by which the Church may assess the Church's investments in companies that the Church finds to be inconsistent with the Church's faith and mission or questionable under the Church's ethical teaching, and criteria by which the Church may evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to engage with such companies and the effectiveness of divestment through creation of a No Buy list from such companies, and
- (b) procedures for the Church to follow in making a decision to engage companies or to establish a No Buy list, and
- (c) to accomplish this work, CCSR is encouraged to look for partner organizations outside of The Episcopal Church in which to participate in Collective Action;

And be it further

Resolved, That this work be completed by CCSR by March of 2020 for consideration and action by Executive Council in that year.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 1069-1070.



Resolution Number: 2012-A015
Title: Commend Democratic Movements and Request Foreign Aid Accountability
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

***Resolved*, That the 77th General Convention commends the “Arab Spring” democratic movements in the Middle East and North Africa for their witness to justice and human rights, and to the power of popular nonviolent organizing for political, economic and societal change; and be it further**

***Resolved*, That the General Convention reaffirms Resolution 1991-A149, “Urge a Full Accounting of the Use of Foreign Aid in the Middle East,” adopted by the 70th General Convention, and calls on the President of the United States for a full accounting of how United States foreign aid, including military aid, is used in the Middle East and North Africa, in recognition that transparency is critical for requiring accountability from aid recipients; and be it further**

***Resolved*, That the 77th General Convention calls upon the President of the United States to seek accountability for those policies and practices of recipients of United States aid that contradict and undermine core democratic principles, as well as those United States laws and statutes that define legal uses of United States funding.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), pp. 322-323.



Resolution Number: 2009-A032

Title: Urge an End to Human Rights Violations in the Philippines

Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended

Final Text:

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention joins The Episcopal Church in the Philippines and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines in urging the United States government to use its considerable influence (including withholding of military aid) to champion human rights and thus encourage an end to extra-judicial killings and disappearances.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), p. 143.



Resolution Number: 1994-D015

Title: Reaffirm Support for Human Rights

Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended

Final Text:

Resolved, That the 71st General Convention commend to the National Council of Churches, which has requested dialogue with its member commissions on human rights as it prepares its own policy statement on this subject, the perspective contained in this resolution; and be it further

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention reaffirm its support for human rights throughout the world and states its conviction that civil rights and political freedom are the universal bedrock of any meaningful scheme of human rights; and be it further

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention commend ecumenical and interfaith support for human rights as a moral imperative for Christians, growing out of the biblical understandings that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, that they are endowed by God with an inalienable dignity, and that they thereby possess a value that is prior to and not dependent upon the acknowledgment of such rights by a political entity; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention commend to the National Council of Churches, which has requested dialogue with its member communions on human rights as it prepares its own policy statement on that subject, the perspective contained in this resolution and its accompanying explanation; and be it further

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention encourage the President and the Secretary of State to take the initiative internationally in promoting the cause of human rights and in restoring the primary focus of human rights effort[s] to the civil rights and political freedoms that are the building blocks of decent and humane societies; and be it further

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention commend continuing dialogue, both within the churches and between other faith communities and their governments, on issues of human rights, especially those issues relevant to their own jurisdictions.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), pp. 183-84.



Resolution Number: 1991-A149
Title: Urge a Full Accounting of the Use of Foreign Aid in the Middle East
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted
Final Text:

***Resolved*, That this 70th General convention of the Episcopal Church calls on the United States government to render a full accounting of all military assistance and sales of military equipment to all nations in the Middle East, and to develop a plan for reducing the amount of military arms in the entire region; and be it further**

***Resolved*, That this General Convention urges the President of the United Stated and the Members of Congress, during this period of *de facto* annexation of Palestinian land, to develop a policy which requires the State of Israel to account to the Government of the United States for the use of all aid in whatever form that the United States grants to the State of Israel and its instrumentalities, in full compliance with all sections of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961; and be it further**

***Resolved*, That this General Convention requests the President of the United States and the Members of Congress to take appropriate steps to ensure that no assistance provided the State of Israel shall be used to cause the relocation of Palestinian people from their homes, nor for new settlements to be located in the occupied areas of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem; with further relocations and new settlements to result in the immediate curtailment of aid from the United States.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Phoenix, 1991* (New York: General Convention, 1992), p. 771.