

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-C002
Title: On Responsible Travel to the Holy Land
Proposer: Rochester
Topic: Middle East

Directly Related: (Attached)

None

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

2018-D039 On the Topic of Israel as a System of Apartheid (Rejected)

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, 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](#).

C002 - On Responsible Travel to the Holy Land

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Rochester

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: No

Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib: No

Directs Dfms Staff: No

Directs Dioceses: No

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: No House Assigned

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: No Committee Assigned

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 81st General Convention recommends that pilgrimage travelers to the Holy Land explore and engage the realities of the circumstances and conditions impacting the lives of today's Palestinians and Israelis, paying particular attention to the Israeli military Occupation of Palestinian territories, to the violations of human rights, and to Palestinian national aspirations. It further recommends that visits to the sites of biblical stories be accompanied by "Living Stones," i.e., Palestinian Christians who are descendants of the first Christians and who feel a special responsibility for maintaining Christian worship in the Holy Land; and be it further

Resolved, That Jesus' ministry of love and justice can be witnessed in today's Palestine and Israel in locations of suffering and hardship such as refugee camps and military checkpoints, as well as in churches and historical sites; and be it further

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention encourage travelers to arrange trips, either whole or in part, with agencies or companies that are Palestinian-owned and/or offer itineraries that include encounters with Palestinians who are experiencing the conditions of Occupation.

Explanation

1. Even after two millennia, the Holy Land still beckons. The call to go and see is powerful. Today's Holy Land is at the center of the faith of most people of the world, followers of the three monotheistic Abrahamic religions. For Christians, to make pilgrimage in the place where Jesus lived out his life and ministry and among the very people who are his spiritual descendants offers a completely unique way to encounter his teachings and make them real.

2. Holy Land pilgrims encounter a place that has not been frozen in time. Today's Holy Land is so much more than stones and stories of ancient history. It is comprised of distinct political entities, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the state of Israel, that are often at the center of world news headlines. There, the past 100 years have been fraught: the end of a world war and an empire; decades of Mandatory rule by a colonial empire; immigration of settler colonists seeking shelter from harm coming up against the inhabitants of centuries; United Nations intervention and partition of lands and peoples; a bloody protracted war resulting in a new "Jewish state" built on conquered and confiscated lands that rendered hundreds of thousands of Palestinians displaced, dispossessed and made refugees; and the imposition of the longest military occupation of one people by another in today's world, now in its 56th year. Inevitably over decades, there have been death; injuries; loss of human rights; family disruption; loss of homes, jobs, and educational opportunities; forced evacuation from long-held lands alongside the restricted personal movement enforced by military occupation; and poverty, hunger, and illness.

3. The circumstances of today's Holy Land, then, are compellingly redolent of Jesus' own time under a Roman military occupation. The conditions are right for authentic pilgrimage that seeks to see, understand, and be transformed. The stories, parables, and narratives of Jesus' ministry that comprise our liturgical worship tell of encounters with the oppressed, the poor and ill, and the marginalized. Surely then, pilgrims to the Holy Land today should seek the same by traveling not to sites long since fallen silent, but to checkpoints, refugee camps, prisons, hospitals and clinics, and encounters with people living in conflict and under occupation and oppression. The few Christians remaining in the Holy Land are Palestinian. Let them be our guides and companions, not those who ignore the very places and conditions where Jesus would be found today.