

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-C027
Title: Conditioning U.S. Military Aid to Israel
Proposer: Washington
Topic: Human Rights, Middle East

Directly Related: (Attached)

2022-D024 Oppose U.S. Military Assistance to Countries that Violate Human Rights
1991-A148 On the Topic of the Middle East (Rejected)
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)

None

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](#).

C027 - Conditioning U.S. Military Aid to Israel

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Washington

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: Yes

Directs Dioceses: No

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: HB

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 06 - Social Justice & International Policy

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: Yes

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the Episcopal Church calls on the state of Israel and all armed Palestinian forces to cease attacks on civilian targets and declare the existence of a humanitarian catastrophe, and urges them to facilitate and carry out robust assistance to people confined in Gaza, especially to prevent pandemic and famine and enable the wounded and vulnerable including hostages to be evacuated to safe and fully resupplied hospitals in Occupied Palestinian territory (in Gaza or the West Bank), or in Israeli hospitals; and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations and Episcopal Public Policy Network only support or enable policies which advance a peaceful, negotiated resolution to the conflict in Gaza; that both assures the future of Israel as a democratic state and leads to the establishment of a secure and self-governed Palestinian state; and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church reaffirm General Convention Resolution 2022-D024 and continue to urge "that U.S. military assistance and arms sales not be used to perpetuate conflict, violate human rights, or contribute to corruption, instability, or violence", consistent with Psalms assuring preference for the "weak and the poor, destitute and downtrodden"; and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church shall call upon the United States Government (USG) to enforce this policy on the state of Israel, as it does with all recipients, pursuant to section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, and all other applicable statutes, by issuing a report within the time period set forth in the law detailing Israel's human rights practices relevant to its use of U.S. military aid; and be it further

Resolved, That, if Israel is found to be in gross violation of said conditions, the Episcopal Church shall promptly call upon the USG to suspend all military aid to Israel and vigorously implement other appropriate penalties specified in law, for as long as Israel has not provided full and effective assurances that it intends to fully abide by said conditions in a manner continuously transparent to the USG.

Explanation

Five rounds of fighting have occurred between Israel and Hamas in the last 15 years in the densely populated Gaza Strip. On October 7, 2023, Hamas, an armed resistance organization, unleashed a brutal attack against Israel, killing hundreds of people, and taking some 200 hostages. Israel retaliated by launching Operation Iron Sword against Gaza, relying on heavy use of airstrikes, tanks, and artillery, when the opportunity availed to foreswear vengeance and turn "swords into plowshares". Much of the military munitions have been supplied by The United States.

The death toll has risen to more than 25,000, with 70 percent being women and children, according to widely accepted Gaza Health Ministry reports. The UN has reported nearly 1.9 million people, more than 85 percent of the population, have been displaced; already by November 24, over 234,000 housing units had been damaged and more than 46,000 homes had been destroyed. The devastation is worse than the two years of bombing of Dresden.

These facts show 1) the scale of the death and destruction caused by Israel's ongoing assault on Gaza, a territory occupied by Israel, which has a duty to protect its inhabitants and infrastructure, 2) the massive material support the U.S. Government (USG) has provided, and 3) the USG failure to implement U.S. law imposing human rights conditions.

The USG has abdicated its duty to limit the scale, scope, and lethality of Israel's use of military aid against Gaza's civilians. Thus, White House on October 27 publicly stated, "We're not drawing red lines for Israel," when that is the USG's obligation. As a result, Israel has provided no accounting for the civilian deaths and destruction it has caused, has barred the entry of almost all food, water, electricity, and medical supplies since October 7, and has grossly impeded humanitarian relief efforts by governments and NGOs. This was reported on site in January by Sens. Chris Van Hollen (Md.) and Jeff Merkley (Ore.). Finally, South Africa's pending International Court of Justice case accuses Israel, by using quotes from the highest Israeli officials, of the intention of excessive violence toward civilian Gazans. The court is considering a preliminary finding in order to call a halt to the bombing.

The Episcopal Church should reaffirm the focus of General Convention 2022-D024 with regard to Israel's violations of human rights; and condemn the USG's failure to block military

aid going to carry out such violations, until Israel has accounted for its actions and committed to abide by human rights norms.



Resolution Number: 2022-D024
Title: Oppose U.S. Military Assistance to Countries that Violate Human Rights
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, 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.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), pp. 868-869.



Resolution Number: 1991-A148
Title: On the Topic of the Middle East
Legislative Action Taken: Rejected [Died With Adjournment]
Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That this 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church commends the initiatives taken by the United States in pursuing peace in the Middle East that have been recently proposed by the Secretary of State, and this General Convention decries the refusal of nations in the region to demonstrate a willingness to meet and negotiate for peace; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention call upon leaders and members of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian traditions to use every means of influence and persuasion to help bring all nations to the peace table immediately, and if finding no peace conference among nations, we call upon the three religious communities to form a shadow peace conference to address the pressing issues, and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention call upon the United States government to establish a time certain for a regional peace conference, and failing to receive a positive response, to initiate a process of the reduction of military assistance and sales of military equipment to all nations in the Middle East, at the same time seeking the full support of other nations elsewhere in the world in the curtailment of the flow of arms to the Middle East.



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 States 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.