

## **General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report**

**Resolution No.:** 2024-D004  
**Title:** Express Solidarity with Palestinians as an Indigenous People  
**Proposer:** Evans, The Rev. Boyd  
**Topic:** Middle East

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**Directly Related:** (Attached)

2012-A131 Express Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples

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

None

**Supplemental Documents:** (Linked)

*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](#).*

# D004 - Express Solidarity with Palestinians as an Indigenous People

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**Final Status:** Not Yet Finalized

**Proposed by:** Evans, The Rev. Boyd

**Endorsed by:** Powell, The Rev. RJ,Neznek, Mary,Sampson, The Rev. Leon

**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:** No

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## Resolution Text

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring,

That the 81st General Convention reaffirm its solidarity with and concern for the well-being of “the Indigenous Peoples of the world,” in accordance with Resolution 2012-A131: Express Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 81st General Convention, in affirming this solidarity recognize that Palestinian Arabs, including our Palestinian Christian sisters and brothers, are among the indigenous people of the lands of Palestine and Israel lying between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 81st General Convention and The Episcopal Church direct the Office of Government Relations to apply the demands of Resolution 2012-A131 to Palestinian Arabs who experience displacement, discrimination, dispossession, and daily harassment at the hands of the state of Israel. Applying the demands entails supporting their right to “retain their traditional lands and territories,” giving “high priority” to protection of the rights of Palestinian Arabs, and urging the U.S. government, in its dealings with the government of Israel, to “identify” and correct Israeli laws and policies that treat Palestinians unfairly or with “invidious discrimination.”

## Explanation

It is widely, but incorrectly, believed that the Palestinian Arabs of today are non-native late-comers to Palestine, having moved there only in recent centuries, particularly following the emergence of Islam in the seventh century. In fact, however, Palestinian Arabs are collectively the descendants of all the ancient and modern peoples who have lived in, immigrated to, and conquered Palestine through the ages. This includes ancient Jews, Canaanites, Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, European Crusaders, and Arabs.

Christian Palestinians have been a presence in Palestine since the time of Jesus; today's Christian Palestinians are descended from the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus who adopted the new faith and became Christianity's earliest practitioners in the first century CE. These earliest Christians spoke Aramaic, as did Jesus and other Jews of the period. In later centuries, with the advent of the Byzantine Roman empire, the language of the land was Greek, but the people's ethnicity did not change; Palestinians of all faiths remained indigenous to Palestine. Following the Muslim Arab conquest in the seventh century, a great many Greek-speaking Christians converted to Islam, and Arabic became the common language. Neither the multiplicity of faiths, the changes of language, nor the admixture of other populations through immigration and conquest over the centuries alters the indigeneity of today's Palestinian Arab population. They are no less indigenous than the Jewish people.

Although the exact numbers or proportions of indigenous peoples are not a measure of their inherent rights in any nation, it is important to note that in Palestine-Israel, the indigenous Palestinian Arab population today roughly equals the Jewish population, each population numbering approximately seven million.

Despite this equality in numbers, there is no equality of political rights: the Palestinian Arabs who live inside Israel's borders and are Israeli citizens, as well as those living in Jerusalem, enjoy some limited rights—limitations not imposed on Jewish citizens—but the almost five million Palestinian Arabs living under Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza enjoy no political rights or freedom whatsoever. Palestinians forcibly expelled in 1948 and their descendants have no right to return to their original homes and land and can receive no compensation for their loss of property and livelihood.

In 2018 Israel enacted a Basic Law entitled "The Nation State of the Jewish People." (Because Israel has no constitution, a Basic Law has the status of a constitutional provision.) This law states that in Israel, as the "nation state of the Jewish People," the right to national self-determination "is exclusive to the Jewish People." The law declares the state to be open to Jewish immigration and encourages the "development of Jewish settlement as a national value." There is no mention of immigration other than of Jews and, in fact, Palestinian Arab immigration is prohibited.



**Resolution Number:** 2012-A131  
**Title:** Express Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention expresses its solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples of the world and supports the rights of Indigenous Peoples to live in and retain their traditional lands and territories, to maintain their languages and enrich their cultures, and to ensure that their traditions are strengthened and passed on for generations to come; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention ask the Presiding Bishop and other representatives of The Episcopal Church to make protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples a priority in joint work with other Provinces of the Anglican Communion, in ecumenical work with other Christian denominations, and in interfaith work with other faith communities; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention reaffirm the 76th General Convention's repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, a misguided, unfair, and harmful legal doctrine which the Church helped promote in earlier centuries, a legal doctrine which has been used in English, Continental, and American law to justify the unfair treatment and exploitation of Indigenous Peoples; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention urges the United States government and governments in other countries in which the Episcopal Church has dioceses to review their laws and policies, in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, and to identify and correct those which treat Indigenous Peoples unfairly or which, although neutral in content, result in invidious discrimination against Indigenous Peoples; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention direct the Office of Government Relations, in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, to make protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples a high priority in its advocacy about United States foreign policy, including advocacy about trade agreements, human rights advocacy, and international environmental protection; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses, and corporate offices of The Episcopal Church, with the aid of resources such as "Exposing the Doctrine of Discovery," to reflect upon their history and to encourage them to support Indigenous Peoples in their ongoing efforts to exercise their inherent sovereignty and fundamental human rights, to continue to raise awareness about the issues facing Indigenous Peoples, and to develop advocacy campaigns to support the rights, aspirations, and needs of Indigenous Peoples; and be it further*

*Resolved, That in consultation with Indigenous Peoples within their dioceses or Provinces that congregations and dioceses be urged to take tangible steps to help Indigenous Peoples, including:*

- **Action to preserve Indigenous Peoples' language, history and culture, such as by supporting appropriate linguistic, historic, Bible (and authorized liturgical resources) translation work for language groups into which the Bible and authorized liturgical resources have not yet been fully translated,**

- **Action to obtain fairer and better treatment of Indigenous Peoples, such as seeking the repeal of unfair laws and policies,**
- **Formation of partnerships with congregations whose members consist primarily of Indigenous Peoples; and be it further**

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses, and corporate offices of The Episcopal Church to support continued use and development of theological reflections by Indigenous Peoples, with guidance from the Office of Indigenous Ministries, Indigenous Theological Training Institute, local Schools for Ministry and seminaries, which promote Indigenous visions of full, good, and abundant life and which strengthen their own spiritual and theological reflections.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), pp. 149-150.