

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2018
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-C038
TITLE: Safeguard the Rights of Palestinian Children
PROPOSER: Province I
TOPIC: Middle East

Directly Related: (Attached)

2003-A028 Encourage Support for Women and Children in War-Torn Areas
1979-B098 Promote the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child

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

2015-B013 Reaffirm a Policy of Reconciliation and Restorative Justice in the Middle East
2006-B018 Endorse the NCC Policy on the Rights of Children
1994-C024 Call for Ratification of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1976 through 2015, 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 at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.

C038 Safeguard the Rights of Palestinian Children

Proposer	Province I
Endorsed by	
Sponsored by	
Page numbers	Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A
HiA / Leg. Cttee	HD / 07 - Social Justice and International Policy
Current Status	Resolution Filed
Version	Original (as filed)
Review Status	Not yet reviewed

RESOLUTION TEXT

- Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 79th General Convention call upon the Office of Government Relations to request assurances from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas that their governments have policies in place to accord all people under the age of 18 living within their jurisdictions the full range of rights and protections called for under international agreements to which their governments have subscribed; and be it further
- Resolved*, That the 79th General Convention direct the Office of Government Relations to call upon U.S. leaders in the Executive and Legislative branches to persuade their Israeli and Palestinian counterparts to sustain their commitments to international law with regard to children's rights and welfare, specifically Article 37 of the "United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child."

EXPLANATION

"Chronic pain was probably best treated not by one pill but holistically. In the same way, the antidote to heroin wasn't so much naloxone; it was community..." "Nobody can do it on their own," [Paul Schoonover, of Columbus, Ohio, whose son Matt overdosed in 2012] said. "But no drug dealer, nor cartel, can stand against families, schools, churches, and communities united together."

--- Dreamland by Sam Quinones, p.330

The Episcopal Church has had an enduring commitment to the Holy Land and its people and desires a peace settlement that would serve the interests and welfare of both Israelis and Palestinians.

However, there is much evidence indicating that current Israeli and Palestinian leadership lacks both the will and the ability to work toward a reasonable settlement in the foreseeable future. That lack of will directly impacts children in the region. UNICEF, Defense of Children International-Palestine (DCI-P) and other organizations working on behalf of children have provided evidence that neither Israel nor the Palestinian Authority, despite having subscribed to the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child, has fully adhered to international law regarding the treatment of Palestinian children. Indeed, studies by UNICEF between 2013 and 2015 have shown that "Ill treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized."

June 2017 marked the 50th anniversary of Israel's military occupation of the West bank and Gaza, the longest occupation of modern times. While the burden of occupation falls upon all Palestinian residents of the West bank and Gaza, it falls most severely upon Palestinian children who constitute almost half of all Palestinians living in those territories. All they have known during their lives has been the occupation, with its restrictions on movement, home demolitions, night time arrests and numerous other humiliations and oppressions. As Palestinians they are subject to Israeli military rule rather than to due process through the civil court system.

Religious denominations and agencies that have previously recognized and addressed the injustices to Palestinian children include Churches for Middle East Peace, the Presbyterian Church-USA, the United Church of Christ, and the American Friends Service Committee.

This resolution would apply pressure on both governments to fully meet their obligations under the UN Convention including as imprisonment only as a last resort; access to legal counsel; parents' presence during interrogation; and freedom from physical or psychological coercion, abuse or violence.

If the occupation is to continue to the foreseeable future, as appears to be the case, The Episcopal Church should do everything within its power to guarantee the rights of Palestinian children. Jesus called us to protect the most valuable among us. Palestinian children are, unquestionably, among the most vulnerable of all our brothers and sisters in the world.

Appendix A: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 37

States Parties shall ensure that:

- (a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age;
- (b) No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time;
- (c) Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age. In particular, every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest not to do so and shall have the right to maintain contact with his or her family through correspondence and visits, save in exceptional circumstances;
- (d) Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action.

Footnotes:

1. UNICEF, Children in Israeli Military detentions – Observations and Recommendations – 6 March 2013

UNICEF Children in Military Detention – Bulletin No. 1 – October 2013

UNICEF, Children in Military Detention – Observations and Recommendations – Bulletin No. 2

February 2015 (<http://www.unicef.org>)

2. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>



Resolution Number: 2003-A028
Title: Encourage Support for Women and Children in War-Torn Areas
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention encourage dioceses to assist all Episcopalians to learn about the plight of and provide support for women and children of all faiths in war torn areas, recent examples including Israel/Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Colombia, Sudan, and Liberia.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 327.



Resolution Number: 1979-B098
Title: Promote the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 1979 General Convention of the Episcopal Church join with other non-governmental organizations in promoting the U.N. Declaration of the Rights of the Child and give on-going support to the higher level of basic services to children; and be it further
Resolved, That the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which states: "The right to affection, love, and understanding; the right to free education; the right to full opportunity for play and recreation; the right to a name and nationality; the right to special care, if handicapped; the right to be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster; the right to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities; the right to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood; the right to enjoy these rights, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national or social origin" is hereby affirmed and adopted by this Convention; and be it further
Resolved, That the Office of Religious Education and the Office of Social Ministries of the Executive Council are hereby commended for their support of the International Year of the Child and are urged to continue this concern for the needs of the children in future years.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Denver, 1979* (New York: General Convention, 1980), p. C-110.