

GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2018
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-D018

TITLE: Negotiating the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict

PROPOSER: The Rev. Canon Brian Grieves

TOPIC: Middle East

Directly Related: (Attached)

- 2015-B013 Reaffirm a Policy of Reconciliation and Restorative Justice in the Middle East
- 2012-B019 Support Israeli-Palestinian Peace
- 2009-B027 On the Topic of Peace and Statehood in Historic Palestine (Rejected)
- 2006-A011 On the Topic of Peace Between Israel and Palestine (Rejected)
- 2006-A012 On the Topic of Israel's Occupation of Palestine (Rejected)
- 1991-A147 Support a Two-state Solution for Israel and the Palestinian People
- 1988-D053 Affirm Goals of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation for Israelis and Palestinians

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

- 1997-A107 Recognize Jerusalem as the Capital of Both Israel and Palestine
- 1994-D065 Recognize Illegality of Israeli Settlements in Gaza and the West Bank
- 1991-D008 Urge a Peaceful Resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
- 1982-B047 Call for Peace in the Middle East

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.

D018 Negotiating the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict

Proposer	The Rev. Canon Brian Grieves
Endorsed by	Mathews, The Rev. Koshy; Smith, Mr. Newland
Sponsored by	
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HiA / Leg. Cttee	HD / 07 - Social Justice and International Policy
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RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church recognize the right of both Israelis and Palestinians to self-determination and to live as sovereign peoples in their homeland, with full human and civil rights and with democratic rule of one person, one vote; and be it further
- 2 *Resolved*, That the Episcopal Church reaffirm our commitment to a negotiated solution between the two parties guided by international law and supported by the international community; and be it further
- 3 *Resolved*, That the Episcopal Church acknowledge that such a peace agreement, agreed upon by both parties, may include a two-state solution as envisioned in the Oslo Accords, leading to a viable, sovereign state for Palestinians, comprising the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, alongside a secure and universally recognized State of Israel, or may encompass other solutions such as one binational state or confederation, recognizing that these possibilities are being raised as the material conditions for a two-state solution have deteriorated due to accelerated settlement expansion in East Jerusalem and the West Bank since the Oslo Accords were signed; and be it further
- 4 *Resolved*, That no people's right to self-determination should be exercised at the expense of another's right to self-determination, and that any negotiated solution be founded upon mutual recognition of the humanity and past and present sufferings of both parties and provide guarantees for the human and civil rights of ethnic and religious minorities within any state, federation, or national boundaries that may be created.

EXPLANATION

The Episcopal Church has supported a two-state resolution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict since 1991, in resolution 1991-A147, and reaffirmed that commitment since the Oslo Accords I and II and the Gaza-Jericho Agreement were signed between 1993-1995, most recently in resolution 2012-Bo19.

Since then, facts on the ground have changed through the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Nearly 600,000 people now live in Israeli settlements in the West Bank (383,000) and East Jerusalem (205,000), – more than double the number of settlers living in those

areas (263,000 total) in 1993 when the first Oslo Accord was signed. Today Israel controls over 42 percent of land in the West Bank and 80 percent of the water, and has demolished 15,000 Palestinian homes, water systems, and other facilities in the Occupied Territories since 1993.

Alarmingly, the Israeli parliament passed the “Settlement Regulation Law” in February 2017, which provides Israel with new legal means to seize privately-owned Palestinian land in the Occupied Territories in order to legalize settlement construction—effectively allowing land ownership rights in the Occupied Territories to be determined by Israeli domestic law.

The Settlement Regulation Law is being challenged in the Israeli High Court of Justice, and parts of it may be struck down, but this law was created in concert with the statements of governing coalition leaders, including cabinet members, that they intend to make the occupied West Bank and all of the illegal settlements within it “part of the State of Israel” (Israeli Minister of Education Naftali Bennett, June 2018) and that “the time has come to express our biblical right to the land” (Israeli Minister of Public Security Gilad Erdan, December 2017).

In the wake of these developments, along with the Trump Administration’s decision to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem—since the status of Jerusalem was considered part of the peace negotiations under Oslo—Palestinian leaders have begun debating other options, including the possibility of a single state. Saeb Erekat, the experienced lead peace negotiator for Palestine, has publicly stated this year that the Palestinians should focus on achieving “one state with equal rights.”

With different options for a final status agreement being broadly discussed by leaders of both Israel and Palestine, it is prudent for the Episcopal Church to amend its official position as outlined in this resolution, while remaining committed to a negotiated settlement agreed upon by both parties that provides for self-determination for all peoples in the region.

“Settlements, 11 November 2017.” B’Tselem, www.btselem.org/settlements. Accessed 20 June 2018.
“Comprehensive Settlement Population, 1972-2011.” Foundation for Middle East Peace, 13 January 2012, www.fmep.org/resource/comprehensive-settlement-population-1972-2010/. Accessed 20 June 2018.

“20 Facts: 20 Years Since the Oslo Accords.” Oxfam, 20 September 2013, www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/oxfam-oslo-20-factsheet.pdf. Accessed 20 June 2018.

“Israel’s Creeping Annexation Policies – Tables, 18 June 2018.” Foundation for Middle East Peace, www.fmep.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/Annexation-Policies.pdf. Accessed 20 June 2018.

“Bennett: The West Bank Will Soon Become Part of Israel.” The Middle East Monitor, 13 June 2018, www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180613-bennett-the-west-bank-will-soon-become-part-of-israel/, Accessed 20 June 2018.

Halbfinger, David. “Emboldened Israeli Right Presses Moves to Doom 2-State Solution.” The New York Times, 1 January 2018, www.nyti.ms/2DLmaOC. Accessed 20 June 2018.

Halbfinger, David. “As a 2-State Solution Loses Steam, a 1-State Plan Gains Traction.” The New York Times, 5 January 2018, www.nyti.ms/2Ec5yQn. Accessed 20 June 2018.



Resolution Number: 2015-B013
Title: Reaffirm a Policy of Reconciliation and Restorative Justice in the Middle East
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That The 78th General Convention reaffirm the vocation of the Church as an agent of reconciliation and restorative justice, and recognize that meaningful reconciliation can help to engender sustainable, long-lasting peace and that such reconciliation must incorporate both political action and locally driven grassroots efforts; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention, lamenting the diplomatic and political stalemate following recent elections in Israel, reaffirm this Church's commitment to a just and peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a negotiated settlement between the parties resulting in two states for two peoples: a secure and universally recognized Israel living alongside a secure and viable state for the Palestinian people; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church commend the United States government for its efforts during the past triennium to broker negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, but express grave sorrow at the collapse of those negotiations in 2014 and the subsequent deterioration of political relations between the parties; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church, recognizing that simple calls for the parties to return to the negotiating table are no longer sufficient to address the urgency of the situation, challenge the United States government, in coordination with global partners , to develop and offer a new, comprehensive, and time-bound framework to the government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority for the conclusive negotiation of a two-state peace agreement and the resolution of all final-status issues; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention urge all national governments represented in The Episcopal Church to invest substantial diplomatic capital in support of such a framework; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention urge the Presiding Bishop and the staff of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society to continue its exemplary work to enhance understanding, build political consensus, and organize grassroots support within The Episcopal Church for this political action; and be it further

Resolved, That Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society: (1) convene a collaborative group of experts and interfaith partners to collect a wide range of resources designed to inform and enliven a conversation among those holding differing convictions; (2) encourage early travel of the 27th Presiding Bishop to the Holy Land, in the spirit of interfaith fellowship, to establish and build relationships with leaders of the communities of the Children of Abraham working for peace, justice, and reconciliation; and (3) continue its commendable efforts to assist Episcopalian to learn about and understand the traumas, hurt, suffering, fears, pain, aspirations, and hopes that shape the daily lives of all living in Israel and the Palestinian Territories; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention commend the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society's investment of \$500,000 during the last triennium in the infrastructure of the Palestinian economy as a tangible step toward building a viable Palestinian state and strengthening the economic well-being of Palestinian communities; and to urge Domestic

and Foreign Missionary Society to expand this loan investment at least twofold in the next triennium; and be it further

***Resolved*, That the General Convention encourage The Episcopal Church to (1) embrace the principles of restorative justice in its advocacy and engagement for the just resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and (2) engage and support the voices of both Israelis and Palestinians — especially those who are themselves victims of violence and injustice—who seek peace with justice through nonviolent and restorative responses to the conflict; and be it further**

***Resolved*, That the General Convention support existing efforts toward restorative justice by urging the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society to identify and find creative ways to commend, support, and elevate the work of local peace-building and economic development initiatives, including those of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East and grassroots organizations jointly led by Israelis and Palestinians; and be it further**

***Resolved*, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$675,000 for the implementation of this resolution to be used as follows: (1) a total of \$60,000 over the course of the triennium to each of five existing local, grassroots peace-building initiatives jointly led by Israelis and Palestinians to support and expand their work; (2) \$300,000 to the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East to support and expand its sustainable peace-building efforts in Israel and the Palestinian Territories through its ministries of health care and education; and (3) \$75,000 to cover other costs associated with the implementation of this resolution.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 913-915.



Resolution Number: 2012-B019

Title: Support Israeli-Palestinian Peace

Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted

Final Text:

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention express its regret at the lack of progress in negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians toward a just and peaceful resolution of the longstanding conflict between the two peoples, and call for the cessation of violence by all parties, and reaffirm this Church's commitment to a negotiated two-state solution in which a secure and universally recognized State of Israel lives alongside a free, viable, and secure state for the Palestinian people, with a shared Jerusalem as the capital of both; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention commend the leadership of the Presiding Bishop in calling all Episcopalians to advocacy for an end to the conflict and support for the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the other Christian communities of the Holy Land, particularly through her 2011 Pastoral Letter on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (accessible on the website of The Episcopal Church); and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention encourage all dioceses, as well as the Executive Council and the Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns, to engage actively in the discipline of advocacy, education, and prayer for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as the provision of humanitarian aid that promotes peace and reconciliation; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention affirm the importance of interfaith dialogue in the resolution of the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both in the Holy Land itself and in other contexts around the world; and decry religious extremism and fundamentalism in all their forms and the violence that arises from their expression; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirm the truth that some mission is best enacted at the local level, and therefore urges all congregations to seek, over the next Triennium, to engage with local Jewish and Muslim congregations to study peace with justice in the Middle East, and urges that the narratives and theologies that inform the conversation on peace with justice in the Middle East be particular focuses of attention; and be it further

Resolved, That the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops, the Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns, the resources of the Episcopal seminaries, and the Advocacy and Networking Committee of the Executive Council be called upon the support, through the triennium, the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian study on peace with justice in the Middle East, and produce and annotated bibliography of resources to be posted on the website of The Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the triennial study groups on Middle East peace with justice prepare report sharing what they learned about a constructive path to peace with justice, and that these reports be collected and shared with the Church by the Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns; and be it further

Resolved, That the Presiding Bishop develop an interfaith model pilgrimage composed equally of Episcopalians, Jews, and Muslims in order to further encourage the travel of pilgrims

and witnesses to the Holy Land in order to experience the multiple narratives of the diverse peoples who call the land their home; and be it further

***Resolved*, That the General Convention affirm positive investment as a necessary means to create a sound economy and a sustainable infrastructure in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip because without these measures there can and will be no viable Palestinian state and no enduring peace; and be it further**

***Resolved*, That in seeking to encourage such positive investment in the Palestinian territories, Episcopalian give priority to investment in the institutions of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, which provide healthcare, education, and social services without discrimination on the basis of religion, political ideology, gender, socioeconomic standing, or national identity; and be it further**

***Resolved*, That the work of the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Good Friday Offering be commended to all Episcopalian as faithful vehicles for providing economic and other support to the Diocese of Jerusalem and its institutions; and be it further**

***Resolved*, That, as a component of this Church's support for positive financial investment in the Palestinian territories, the General Convention urge the Economic Justice Loan Committee to consider a loan of at least \$200,000 to strengthen the economic infrastructure of the Palestinian territories.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), pp. 221-222.



Resolution Number: 2009-B027

Title: On the Topic of Peace and Statehood in Historic Palestine

Legislative Action Taken: Rejected

Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 76th General Convention, considering the Church's mission to promote peace for all God's people, warmly applaud the initiative of President Barack Obama and his Middle East envoy, George Mitchell, to bring stronger and more resolute American diplomatic leadership to the cause of peace between Israel and Palestine and to the Middle East; and be it further

Resolved, That we express our appreciation to Bishop Suheil Dawani and the Diocese of Jerusalem for their ongoing witness and dedication to reconciliation and peace; and be it further

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention acknowledge the tragic histories of the Jewish and Palestinian peoples as victims of injustice, wars, dispersion and exile, the existential fear and insecurity this has created for both peoples, and the distress their conflict has caused throughout the Middle East; and be it further

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention respect the profound commitment of Israelis and Palestinians to the land they regard as their homeland; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention call upon Israelis and Palestinians to recognize one another's right to statehood, economic viability and security, and that all other nations do likewise; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention call for the cessation of violence by all Palestinians and Israelis; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention call on the Government of the United States of America to practice financial transparency in all of its aid to Palestinians and to Israel; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention call for the end of the air, water and land blockade of the Gaza Strip thereby permitting free and uninhibited access for all humanitarian assistance, for educational, reconstruction and development materials and for ordinary trade; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention call for the wall in whatever its form around and through Palestinian land to be brought down; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention call for an end to the on-going confiscation of Palestinian land, demolition of housing and the displacement of people; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention call for a just resolution for Palestinian refugees; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention call for the creation of a single, viable, sovereign Palestinian state, independent of the State of Israel, comprising all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with each state controlling its own water rights, and with Jerusalem serving as capital of both Israel and Palestine, in order to encourage a comprehensive and enduring peace.



Resolution Number: 2006-A011

Title: On the Topic of Peace Between Israel and Palestine

Legislative Action Taken: Rejected [Died With Adjournment]

Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 75th General Convention reaffirm The Episcopal Church's commitment to:

1. the rightful existence of the State of Israel as a nation among nations;
2. the rightful existence of a State of Palestine as a nation among nations;
3. the recognition of Jerusalem as the shared capital of the two states;
4. the end of all violence and its crippling impact on Israeli and Palestinian societies;
5. the withdrawal by Israel from *all occupied Palestinian territories as established in 1967 its settlements in the West Bank*;
6. the return of all parties to the negotiating table rather than unilateral action by any party;
7. the eradication of the sin of anti-Semitism *and all other forms of racism*.



Resolution Number: 2006-A012

Title: On the Topic of Israel's Occupation of Palestine

Legislative Action Taken: Rejected [Died With Adjournment]

Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 75th General Convention declare that the following positions constitute policies of The Episcopal Church ~~and direct The Episcopal Church's Office of Peace and Justice Ministries to advocate:~~

1. an end to the isolation of East Jerusalem and Bethlehem from the West Bank created by the continued construction of Israeli settlements, settler roads and the *barrier Wall*;
2. removal of the *barrier Wall* by Israel where it violates Palestinian territory and termination of the policy and practice of terrorism by any constituency of the Palestinian Authority;
3. assurance of human rights for Palestinians *and Israelis*;
4. support for the return of sovereign control of Gaza's airspace *and coastline and borders* to the Palestinian people *and mutual respect for borders*; and
5. *elimination of corruption within the Palestinian Authority and appropriate financial transparency to better serve human and economic rights of Palestinians*; and
6. assurance that no U.S. tax dollars are used, *directly or indirectly*, to finance the *building of the barrier and bypass roads that support the settlements Occupation, directly or indirectly*.



Resolution Number: 1991-A147
Title: Support a Two-state Solution for Israel and the Palestinian People
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church supports the existence of Israel as a sovereign state, the democratic and humanitarian inspired homeland for displaced Jewish people, and calls upon the Government of the United States:

To assist in the creation of a Palestinian State, and,

To assist Israel to secure the human rights of indigenous Arabs within Israel through:

- a. ending the violation of civil and human rights and by stopping the brutalities committed against individual, families, and groups which now occur;
- b. restricting the use of military force to measures and practices proportionate to the situation and suited to the control of civilian populations, and, to that end, to assure that military personnel and units, before assignment to duty, be given proper training in riot control and the techniques and practices of control of civilian populations;
- c. causing the State of Israel to discontinue the use of administrative detention and collective punishment;
- d. the permanent reopening of schools, universities, and other educational institutions for the Palestinians in the occupied territories;
- e. causing the State of Israel to be even handed and fair in the recognition and enforcement of the rights and interests of the Palestinians with respect to their personal safety, property rights, water rights, and rights of access to commercial markets; and
- f. encouraging the opening of candid and patient communication between the representatives of the Palestinians and the State of Israel and between the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples; and
- g. reestablishing and safe-guarding the City of Jerusalem as inter-religious municipality in which full respect is accorded the rights and interests of Christians, Jews, and Muslims.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Phoenix, 1991* (New York: General Convention, 1992), p. 794.



Resolution Number: 1988-D053
Title: Affirm Goals of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation for Israelis and Palestinians
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 69th General Convention:

- a) affirm the importance of the Church in the exercise of its prophetic role by standing on the side of the oppressed in their struggle for justice, and by promoting justice, peace and reconciliation for all peoples in the region;
- b) affirm the existence of the State of Israel and its right to recognized and secure borders, as well as the civic and human rights of all those who live within its borders;
- c) affirm the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, including choice of their own representatives and the establishment of their own state;
- d) support the convening of an international conference over Palestine/Israel under the auspices of the UN and based on all the UN resolutions in relation to this conflict, to which all parties of the conflict be invited; and
- e) commit itself to continued prayer for Israelis and Palestinians, for Muslim, Jew and Christian, for the achievement of justice, peace and reconciliation for all.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Detroit, 1988* (New York: General Convention, 1989), p. 293.