

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

**RESOLUTION NO.:** 2018-D027  
**TITLE:** Pursuing Justice in Gaza  
**PROPOSER:** Mr. Newland Smith  
**TOPIC:** Middle East

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**Directly Related:** (Attached)

2015-B013 Reaffirm a Policy of Reconciliation and Restorative Justice in the Middle East  
2012-A016 Affirm the Moral Responsibility to Protect Populations from Atrocities  
2012-C060 On the Topic of a Resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict (Rejected)  
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)

1991-D008 Urge a Peaceful Resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict  
1982-B047 Call for Peace in the Middle East  
1976-D070 Call for Efforts to Restore Freedom in Oppressive States

*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.*

# D027 Pursuing Justice in Gaza

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<b>Proposer</b>	Mr. Newland Smith
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Floberg, The Rev. John; Hallanan, The Rev. Sunny
<b>Sponsored by</b>	
<b>Page numbers</b>	Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A
<b>HiA / Leg. Cttee</b>	HD / 07 - Social Justice and International Policy
<b>Current Status</b>	Resolution Filed
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## RESOLUTION TEXT

- Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the General Convention directs the Office of Government Relations, using the powers at its disposal, to press Congress and the State Department to reinstate the full funding commitment of the US government to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for the 1.5 million Palestinian refugees in Gaza and the additional 3.5 million trapped for 70 years in refugee camps in the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan; and be it further
- Resolved*, That the Convention condemns the calculated use of live fire by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on civilians in Gaza, during full-scale Israeli military assaults as well as lethal sniper and drone attacks on Palestinians engaging in nonviolent demonstrations. In light of Israel's escalating indifference to international law and the rights of civilians under the Geneva Convention and other treaties, the Convention calls on the Congress and President of the United States to cooperate with calls by the United Nations for independent, transparent investigations into IDF shoot-to-kill policies against unarmed civilians. If information of human rights violations by Israeli military units is corroborated, the Convention stresses the obligation of the US government to enforce the Leahy Amendment, a statute which prohibits the U.S. from providing funds to foreign military units where human rights violations have been credibly identified.

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## EXPLANATION

The Episcopal Church has a strong history of advocacy on behalf of a just and lasting peace in Palestine and Israel. The Church has also urged relief of the dire humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. A 2006 action of the Executive Council called for Church policy to include support for the return of sovereign control of Gaza's airspace and coastline and borders to the Palestinian people and mutual respect for borders. Further, a 2010 action of the Executive Council called upon the President of the United States and the Congress to press the State of Israel to end the blockade of the Gaza Strip, thereby permitting free and uninhibited access for all humanitarian assistance, a return to normalized trade, and the lifting of the ban on building and educational materials.

The Israeli military blockade of Gaza, which controls all land, sea and air access to the Gaza Strip and its nearly 2 million people, has now passed its tenth year. This blockade, although ostensibly directed against the group Hamas, denies health care, shelter, fuel, food, freedom of movement, water,

building materials and clothing to all people of Gaza so that in fact, those primarily suffering from the blockade are innocent non-combatants, especially women and children. The blockade and its effects constitute collective punishment, a practice forbidden by international law and the Geneva Convention. Added to the blockade have been three overwhelming military assaults during the same period that have killed and injured thousands of people, mostly women and children; destroyed most of Gaza's infrastructure, including schools, mosques, and hospitals; left tens of thousands homeless; blocked access to health care; and caused pervasive unemployment and poverty. Gaza is now the scene of one of the world's worst humanitarian crises; assessments predict that Gaza will be uninhabitable by 2020.

The US government recently stated its intention to reduce support of UNRWA by \$65 million. Two-thirds of the people of Gaza are classified as refugees and receive most of their health care, food, and education from UNRWA. Such a cruel and drastic reduction in funding basic human services will extend the suffering of the people of Gaza even more.

Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza, owned and operated by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, is one of the few Christian institutions in Gaza and receives much of its funding from caring for UNRWA patients; the reduced financial support will threaten its



**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 Episcopalians 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-A016  
**Title:** Affirm the Moral Responsibility to Protect Populations from Atrocities  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

***Resolved, That the 77th General Convention affirms that our Lord's commandment to love thy neighbor implies a binding moral responsibility on sovereign states to protect their populations from mass atrocities, including genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as defined by international law; and be it further***

***Resolved, That the General Convention welcomes the United Nations' establishment of the responsibility to protect as an international norm, and its efforts to uphold it through collective action when individual states fail to do so; and be it further***

***Resolved, That the General Convention commends the President of the United States for adopting the responsibility to protect as a principle of United States foreign policy; and be it further***

***Resolved, That the General Convention most strongly discourages the abuse of this norm to rationalize military actions in sovereign states for political ends; and be it further***

***Resolved, That the General Convention encourages the Presiding Bishop through the Office of Government Relations to join the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect so as to shape the continued development of precautionary principles for this norm and promote its faithful implementation; and be it further***

***Resolved, That the General Convention urges all Episcopalians to understand and reflect upon the principle of the responsibility to protect, and to advocate for its adherence by their respective governmental leaders.***

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), p. 226.



**Resolution Number:** 2012-C060  
**Title:** On the Topic of a Resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Rejected [Died with Adjournment]  
**Text of the Resolution:**

*Resolved*, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 77th General Convention, mindful of the impasse in reaching a just resolution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, calls on the Executive Council (using appropriate staff) to develop and implement a strategy of advocacy and education in the Church during the next triennium to further a just resolution of the conflict utilizing existing policies and resources, including but not limited to the following:

- A robust use of the Episcopal Public Policy Network in promoting Church policies in our nation's capital
- Participating in corporate social responsibility by more vigorous and public corporate engagement with companies in the Church's investment portfolio that do business in illegal Israeli settlements or contribute to the infrastructure of the Occupation
- Identifying a project of economic engagement through a loan of at least \$200,000 from the Church's economic justice loan fund that strengthens the economic infrastructure of the Territories
- Assist individual Episcopalians by providing information on products made and distributed from illegal Israeli settlements so that they can make informed consumer choices
- An examination of actions the U.S. might take to support international law and human rights; and be it further

*Resolved*, That Council include in its planning a study in the next triennium in every Diocese of "KAIROS PALESTINE 2009" released in December 2009 by Palestinian Christian leaders to address the plight of Palestinian Christians living under military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza as well as those Christians living within the state of Israel who do not enjoy the full rights and privileges of Jewish-Israeli citizens; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Council further consider using as a resource for this study plan an Episcopal version of Steadfast Hope (adapted from the Presbyterian original) as developed by the Palestine Israel Network of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns give high priority to peace with justice in the Holy Land and report to the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church with recommendations on how best to support our Anglican brothers and sisters in the Holy Land; and be it further

*Resolved*, That all bishops, clergy and lay people of the Episcopal Church in the United States be encouraged to travel to the region as pilgrims and witnesses, and to provide various forms of support for the Church in the Holy Land, including the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, its parishes, and its Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Suheil Dawani, including through the sterling work of the Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Good Friday Offering, and be it further

*Resolved*, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance provide a budget allocation of \$5,000 to Council and staff in assisting with this work.



**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.