

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-D038
TITLE: Civil Rights and Equality for All in Israel
PROPOSER: The Very Rev. Dr. Koshy Mathew
TOPIC: Middle East

Directly Related: (Attached)

2012-C060 On the Topic of a Resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict (Rejected)
2009-B027 On the Topic of Peace and Statehood in Historic Palestine (Rejected)
2006-A012 On the Topic of Israel's Occupation of Palestine (Rejected)
1994-D015 Reaffirm Support for Human Rights
1991-A147 Support a Two-state Solution for Israel and the Palestinian People
1991-A149 Urge a Full Accounting of the Use of Foreign Aid in the Middle East
1976-D070 Call for Efforts to Restore Freedom in Oppressive States

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

2003-D008 Urge Israel to End Policy of Demolition of Palestinian Homes
2000-B016 Affirm Refugee Rights of Palestinians and Israelis
1991-A149 Urge a Full Accounting of the Use of Foreign Aid in the Middle East
1991-D008 Urge a Peaceful Resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
1988-D053 Affirm Goals of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation for Israelis and Palestinians
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.

D038 Civil Rights and Equality for All in Israel

Proposer	The Very Rev. Dr. Koshy Mathews
Endorsed by	Grieves, The Rev. Canon Brian; 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

- Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church express concern regarding the more than 50 discriminatory laws in Israel aimed at its Palestinian and ethnic minority citizens that have created an unequal system of access to land, housing, education and full rights in the political system that draws disturbing comparisons to the segregation and Jim Crow era in the United States which led to the Civil Rights Movement; and be it further
- Resolved*, That the General Convention call on Israel to embrace a vision of a democratic state with equal rights for all citizens, including Jews, Christians and Muslims, recognizing that Israel cannot be both a democracy and a Jewish state that privileges Jews in its legal system over its other citizens; and be it further
- Resolved*, That the General Convention call on the President of the United States and Congress to suspend all military aid to Israel until Israel is in full compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by changing its laws, policies and practices that favor its Jewish citizens and discriminate against its Christian and Muslim citizens and other minorities; and be it further
- Resolved*, That the General Convention call on the President of the United States and the Secretary of State to advocate with their Israeli counterparts to cease all actions that block equal access of all citizens in Israel in the following areas: a. legal system; b. citizenship privileges; c. income and employment; e. distribution of resources and social welfare; f. access to land; g. educational resources; h. availability of health resources; i. political participation, including freedom of speech and the right to dissent.

EXPLANATION

Episcopalians have long stood against legal discrimination based on ethnicity, race and religion in the United States and around the world, for example in the Civil Rights movement, and in South Africa. Those of us who live in the United States and whose tax dollars are funding the State of Israel to the tune of billions of dollars, have a particular responsibility to object to a system of laws in that country that, by design, discriminate against minority groups in the country on the basis of ethnicity and religion.

Here is more information on some of the discriminatory laws:

From Roland Nikles, June 14, 2015: <http://mondoweiss.net/2015/06/database-discriminatory-israel/>

“The most serious discriminations were established early and relate to land control and citizenship. First, the state took over and controlled approximately 93 percent of all lands within the 1949 cease fire lines, and the state has subsequently used this land preferentially for its Jewish majority by making land available to Jews for development, and denying building permits and the ability to develop land to Palestinians. Second, the state established discriminatory preferences about who could immigrate, return to, or stay—in short belong—in the land as a citizen.

1. 1950 law about confiscation of Absentee Landlord Property. This law defines persons who were expelled, fled, or who left the country after November 29, 1947 as “absentee.” Property belonging to “absentees” was placed under the control of the State of Israel with the Custodian for Absentees’ Property. The Absentee Property Law was the main legal instrument used by Israel to take possession of the land belonging to the internal and external Palestinian refugees, and Muslim Waqf properties across the state. This law continues to be used to this day by quasi-governmental agencies in Israel to take over Palestinian properties in East Jerusalem, for example.

2. 1950 Law of Return. This allows every Jewish person to immigrate to Israel and this extends to the children and grandchildren of Jews, as well as their spouses, and the spouses of their children and grandchildren. The flip side of this is that the rights of Palestinians and others to enter the state and become citizens, even if they were born in the area that is now the State of Israel, are extremely restrictive. This discrimination against the non-Jewish minority has been periodically reinforced. For example, the ban on family unification law of 2003 prohibits citizens of Israel from reuniting with Palestinian spouses living in the West Bank or Gaza.

3. In 1952 the state authorized the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency, and other Zionist bodies founded at the turn of the 20th century to function in Israel as quasi-governmental entities in order to further advance the goals of the Zionist movement, to the detriment of minorities.

4. The Land Acquisition Law of 1953 transferred the land of 349 Arab towns and villages—approximately 1.2 million dunams in all (~468 square miles)—to the state to be used preferentially for the Jewish majority.

5. In 1953, the Knesset bestowed governmental authorities on the Jewish National Fund (JNF or Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael) to purchase land for exclusively Jewish use. The state granted financial advantages, including tax relief to facilitate such purchases.

6. In 1960, the state passed a law which stipulates that the ownership of “Israel lands”—namely the 93% of land under the control of the state, the Jewish National Fund, and the Development Authority—cannot be transferred in any manner.

Although most Palestinians that remained in 1949 were granted Israeli citizenship, they were subject to martial law until 1966. Travel permits, curfews, administrative detentions, and expulsions were part of life until 1966. Once Palestinians were relieved from martial law, laws were passed to clearly define the primacy of ethnically Jewish Israelis.

7. In 1969, the state passed a law that gave statutory recognition to cultural and educational institutions, and defined their aims, inter alia, as developing and fulfilling Zionist goals to promote Jewish culture and education at the expense of minority goals.

8. There is a law mandating that Knesset session must be opened with a reading of portions of Israel’s

declaration of independence that emphasizes the exclusive connection of the state of Israel to the Jewish people.

9. There is a law that bans any political party that denies the existence of Israel as a “Jewish” state. In other words, a party that would advocate equal rights for all citizens of Israel irrespective of ethnicity would not be allowed to enter the Knesset.

10. There are laws that establish separate educational systems which are then unequally administered. More recently, the Knesset has passed laws to defend against efforts to bring the Palestinian minority onto a more equal footing.

11. In 2011 the Knesset passed a law that empowers hundreds of local Jewish communities to exclude applicants based on ethnicity or religion. The Supreme Court upheld this law in September 2014.

12. In 2011 the Knesset passed a law prohibiting anyone from calling for a boycott of Israel, its institutions, or any person because of their affiliation with Israel, including the settlements in the occupied territories. The law creates a private right of action for persons targeted by a boycott to sue for damages. As Noam Sheizaf puts it: “You can boycott anything in Israel except the occupation.” This vague law is blatantly aimed at Palestinians who are supportive of the BDS movement—while it allows people like Avigdor Lieberman to call for boycott of Arab owned businesses with impunity. The law was upheld by Israel’s Supreme Court on April 15, 2015.

As demonstrated by its decision upholding the boycott law, the Supreme Court of Israel has failed to stem the ever rightward tilt of the Israeli polity.”



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: 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-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: 1994-D015
Title: Reaffirm Support for Human Rights
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 71st General Convention commend to the National Council of Churches, which has requested dialogue with its member commissions on human rights as it prepares its own policy statement on this subject, the perspective contained in this resolution; and be it further

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention reaffirm its support for human rights throughout the world and states its conviction that civil rights and political freedom are the universal bedrock of any meaningful scheme of human rights; and be it further

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention commend ecumenical and interfaith support for human rights as a moral imperative for Christians, growing out of the biblical understandings that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, that they are endowed by God with an inalienable dignity, and that they thereby possess a value that is prior to and not dependent upon the acknowledgment of such rights by a political entity; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention commend to the National Council of Churches, which has requested dialogue with its member communions on human rights as it prepares its own policy statement on that subject, the perspective contained in this resolution and its accompanying explanation; and be it further

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention encourage the President and the Secretary of State to take the initiative internationally in promoting the cause of human rights and in restoring the primary focus of human rights effort[s] to the civil rights and political freedoms that are the building blocks of decent and humane societies; and be it further

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention commend continuing dialogue, both within the churches and between other faith communities and their governments, on issues of human rights, especially those issues relevant to their own jurisdictions.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), pp. 183-84.



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: 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.



Resolution Number: 1976-D070
Title: Call for Efforts to Restore Freedom in Oppressive States
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That this 65th General Convention

Commend again the continued witness of the Church in such countries and affirm the aspirations of its members to achieve their goals;
Call upon the Presiding Bishop to develop dialogue with other Church jurisdictions in order to bear like witness;
Call upon those U.S.A. business concerns transacting business in such countries to act responsibly toward assisting in the achievement of such goals; and
Call upon the Government of the United States to redouble its efforts [via the U.S.], via diplomatic channels and via whatever other non-violent means are available to it, to encourage those States which engage in oppressive and racist practices, to restore freedom to practice religion, justice and dignity to all their people.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis 1976* (New York: General Convention, 1977), p. C-120.