

Resolution on Advocating for the Rights of Palestinian Children and Families

Submitted by: Israel Palestine Task Force

Number of Members: 8 Members present when voting: 8

Members voting for: 8 Members voting against: 0

Date adopted: August 7, 2021

Co-sponsored by: Conference Advocacy and Justice Committee

Number of Members: Members present when voting: 11

Members voting for: 11 Members voting against: 0

Date adopted: August 18, 2021

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Fiscal Impact: None

Parliamentary Procedure

Resolution:

- 1 Be it resolved that the California-Nevada Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church (Conference):
- 2 1. Urges its clergy, lay leaders, and members to learn more about the plight of Palestinian children and
- 3 families living under Israeli military occupation.¹ The Conference encourages members to
- 4 acknowledge that allowing U.S. funds to be used by Israeli authorities in detaining, imprisoning and
- 5 abusing Palestinian children in a military detention system, subjecting families to home evictions
- 6 and demolitions, and annexing Palestinian property, are violations of both domestic and
- 7 international law.
- 8 2. Joins the UMC General Board of Church and Society and other faith-based organizations in
- 9 endorsing the *Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli*
- 10 *Military Occupation Act*, (“The Palestinian Children and Families Act,”) (H.R.2590), which addresses
- 11 these concerns.²
- 12 3. Urges clergy, lay leaders, and church members, on their own behalf, to contact (write, call, or meet)
- 13 their member of Congress to urge them to co-sponsor H.R.2590.
- 14 4. Urges U.S. Representatives within Conference boundaries to co-sponsor H.R.2590 in the House of
- 15 Representatives.
- 16 5. Directs the Conference Secretary to write U.S. Representatives within Conference boundaries
- 17 informing them of this resolution.
- 18 6. Shall be listed as an endorsing organization of H.R.2590.

¹ See, e.g., Human Rights Watch, April 27, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>.

² As of August 3, 2021, H.R.2590 has 29 cosponsors, including 4 Members of Congress here in the geographical area of Cal/Nev AC: Reps. Jared Huffman (CA-2), Jackie Speier (CA-4) Jerry McNerney (CA-9), Mark DeSaulnier (CA-11). 140+ human rights and faith-based organizations, including among others General Board of Church and Society, United Methodists for Kairos Response, National Council of Churches US, J Street, Jewish Voice of Peace Action, American Muslims for Palestine, Movement for Black Lives, showing a diverse support for Palestinian human rights.

Background:

The California Nevada Annual Conference has consistently passed resolutions and endorsed measures to protect the rights of Palestinian children.³ Legislation has been introduced and reintroduced in the U.S. Congress describing the crisis and seeking to prevent the U.S. from financing Israel's military detention, interrogation, abuse and ill-treatment of Palestinian children.⁴

On April 15, 2021, Rep. Betty McCollum (MN-4) introduced the Palestinian Children and Families Act, H.R. 2590, which "seeks to promote justice, equality and human rights for Palestinian children and families by prohibiting Israeli authorities from using U.S. taxpayer funds to detain and torture Palestinian children, demolish and seize Palestinian homes, and further annex Palestinian Land in the occupied West Bank," in violation of international law.

Each year, Israel incarcerates approximately 700 Palestinian children in its military detention system.⁵ Children as young as twelve are subjected to arrest, abuse and imprisonment. Children are often held for an extended time without the presence or the knowledge of their parents, or access to a lawyer.⁶

Israel, in violation of humanitarian and international law, seizes, appropriates and destroys Palestinian property, displacing Palestinian civilians in the Israeli military controlled West Bank and Gaza.⁷

In 2020, Israel stated that its goal is to formally annex the West Bank to make way for more illegal settlements.⁸ UN Human Rights Chief Michelle Bachelet stated that this would not only seriously damage peace efforts, but would have a "disastrous impact on human rights of Palestinians."

Protecting Palestinian children and families from inhumane treatment, colonialism, and ethnic cleansing is consistent with essential Christian values, United Methodist Social Principles, international law, and universal human rights.

³ <https://iptaskforce.weebly.com/resolutions.html>

⁴ In 2017, Rep. Betty McCollum introduced H.R.4391, Promoting Human Rights by Ending Israeli Military Detention of Palestinian Children Act, which legislative action was re- introduced into Congress in 2019 (H.R.2407). For a fuller summary of the previous bills, see No Way To Treat A Child, Legislative overview, https://nwtac.dci-palestine.org/hr2590_legislation_overview.

⁵ See, DCI-P, No Way To Treat A Child, <http://nwtac.dci-palestine.org> and United Methodists for Kairos Response, Palestinian Children & the Israeli Occupation, https://www.kairosresponse.org/quick_facts_series.html

⁶ See, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report, describing the problem as "widespread, systemic, and institutionalized." <https://www.unicef.org/sop/reports/children-israeli-military-detention>. For more on the mistreatment of Palestinian children in military detention, see also, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/children-behind-bars>

⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/west-bank-demolitions-and-displacement-january-2021>.

⁸ UMC has long opposed the buildup of illegal settlements. See Book of Resolutions, 6111. For a current status, see B'tselem Report, March 2021, *This Is Ours – And This Too* https://www.btselem.org/publications/202103_this_is_ours_and_this_too