



Mennonite Church Canada

A Resolution to the Mennonite Church Canada Delegate Assembly July 2016: Resolution on Palestine and Israel

PREAMBLE

North American Mennonites have lived and studied, ministered and served in Palestine and Israel for nearly 70 years. Many partnerships have formed over these years, particularly through Mennonite Central Committee, our various denominational mission boards and Christian Peacemaker Teams. Thousands of Mennonites from Canada and the US have participated in learning tours and exchanges facilitated by Mennonite educational institutions, service and mission agencies, and tour operators. Most recently, Mennonite Church Canada has sent workers to serve at Bethlehem Bible College and Serve Nazareth.

This resolution emerges largely in response to the plea of Palestinian Christians that the global church come alongside the Palestinian people as they suffer under Israel's 49-year military occupation of their lands: the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. Their concerns are expressed in the 2009 document entitled *A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering*, issued by the churches of the region, through a cooperative effort known as Kairos Palestine.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS:

- We are called to “follow Christ in the way of peace, doing justice, bringing reconciliation and practicing nonresistance” (Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, article 22);
- We believe God calls us to speak truth to power, urging our governments, institutions, and businesses to take peaceful and nonviolent action against injustice where it occurs;
- We hear continued pleas from Palestinian Christians that Western Christians take notice of the suffering of all Palestinians under Israeli occupation; we also recognize and lament the suffering of Israeli citizens.
- We believe it is God’s will that Israelis and Palestinians live with one another in peace, justice, freedom, and security;
- We lament Israel’s ongoing and increasingly entrenched military occupation and settlement of Palestinian lands in contravention of international law, including its violations of Palestinians’ rights to movement and self-determination;

- We hear Palestinian Christians urging us and fellow-believers around the world to exert economic pressure on Israel—through boycotts, divestment, and sanctions—as one of the few remaining options to end the occupation and facilitate a just peace with the Palestinian people;
- We recognize the complexity of the conflict between the state of Israel and Palestine.
- Even as we address the situation in Palestine and Israel, we confess our own complicity in the colonization and oppression of the Indigenous peoples of Canada, as well as our history of racist attitudes and behaviours toward Jewish people —

BE IT RESOLVED:

- We look to the gospel of Jesus Christ for guidance and grace in our responses to the Palestine and Israel context;
- We commit ourselves to ongoing prayer, searching, and discernment concerning the ways in which we as congregations, communities, and church members are impeding or facilitating, ignoring or promoting, the quest for a just peace between Palestinians and Israelis.
- We affirm the efforts of Israelis and Palestinians who are committed to non-violent ways of overcoming the injustice in their region; we commit ourselves to working in partnership with them and with Canadian Jewish and Palestinian communities.
- We urge our member congregations to deepen their understanding of the Palestine-Israel relationship through the study of educational materials on the topic and through participation in learning tours to the region;
- We ask the Mennonite Church Canada General Board, regional churches, congregations, and members to avoid investing in or supporting companies that do business with Israeli settlements and the Israel Defense Forces, and companies that are profiting from the occupation of the Palestinian territories; and
- We encourage the government of Canada to support measures that put pressure on Israel (including through economic sanctions) to end the occupation and work for a just peace, in accordance with international law.

CARRIED