

A160 – Assembly 2023 Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel

Moved by: The Most Rev. Greg Kerr-Wilson

Seconded by: The Rt. Rev. Andrew Asbil

Be it resolved that this General Synod:

In partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, gathered as Assembly 2023, reaffirm the commitment of our churches to the pursuit of peace with justice for all in Palestine and Israel.

We ask:

1. The Primate and the National Bishop to respond to opportunities for solidarity and advocacy, including responding to specific incidents of human rights violations;
2. Our churches to seek ways to provide safe spaces in Canada for conversation and collaboration in pursuing truth, and working for a just and lasting peace among all people of the region;

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3. Our churches to decrease the presence and impact of Christian Zionism within our denominations while discerning ecumenical and civil society possibilities for greater interaction with Palestinian Christians and those of the Muslim and Jewish faith who seek a just peace in the region;
4. ~~Our churches to study and reflect upon the parallels between the dispossession of Palestinians from their homes and lands and the experience of broken treaties and the occupation of unceded territories of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, including the ways the churches themselves have been complicit in this, and to discern actions for justice, peace and healing in all contexts;~~

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4. Our church to study and reflect upon the long history of anti-semitism within Christianity and the ongoing legacy of anti-semitism in our biblical interpretation and theology (Christian Supersessionism);

5. Anglican and Lutherans to

- a. pray for peace and justice in Palestine and Israel,
- b. celebrate Jerusalem and Holy Land Sunday annually,
- c. grow in awareness of the realities of life and Christian ministry in the Holy Land, and,
- d. be open to opportunities for accompaniment, advocacy, and action; and

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6. The General Synod Office and the National Office to
 - a. examine, discuss, and address emerging realities, including the implications of the recent reports by B'Tselem, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International, and for its governing bodies to respond appropriately; and
 - b. continue to support the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem in their deep capacity for and implementation of programs that serve the needs of local communities and peoples.

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We affirm the rightful place of the State of Israel in the community of nations and recognize its legitimate security needs. We affirm the State of Palestine and its right of self-determination and legitimate security needs. We condemn the Israeli blockade of Gaza, and the occupation of East Jerusalem and West Bank since 1967, including settlement construction and expansion in these territories, as illegal under international law and must be ended. We believe it is only through an end to the occupation and a just, comprehensive and lasting peace settlement that the security of both Palestinians and Israelis can be assured.

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We affirm that our work concerning Palestine and Israel is guided by principles for human rights and peace, including:

- Respect and assertion of human rights and dignity for all
- Commitment to International Law and International Conventions
- Equality including gender justice and racial justice
- Commitment to challenge Christian Zionism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia
- Non-violence
- Ending political and religious extremism
- Self-determination
- Commitment to advocacy and action

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We affirm the need to listen to the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches, and repeated pleas of the Christian communities of the region, and to accompany them in prayer and action. This includes our primary partners, The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

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We join the World Council of Churches in recognizing that Israeli discrimination against Palestinians is overt and systemic. The ongoing half-century-long occupation continues to contradict the human dignity and human rights of Palestinians living under this system of control, while the response of the international community to this travesty continues to fail. The 2022 suppression of several Palestinian human rights organizations by Israeli authorities without much effective opposition by the international community is an emblematic example of this system of control and failings. For Palestinians, the situation is sadly compounded by the grave divisions and inadequacies of the Palestinian authorities, including reprisals against opposition leaders and the lack of legal and democratic accountability.

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We affirm the advocacy concerns identified by Canadian church members in the 2020 KAIROS Palestine and Israel Delegation Report:

- Canada has a strong policy base to take leadership and support local women's peace building initiatives as reflected in the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) and National Action Plan of Women, Peace and Security. We urge Canada to take leadership on these issues and to implement these policies in the government's work in Palestine and Israel.
- Canada has articulated a strengthened commitment to support and defend human rights defenders in the recent policy, Voices at Risk: Canada's Guidelines on Supporting Human Rights Defenders. We welcome this new policy and call on the Canadian government and its Embassy and Office, to fully implement these guidelines in its relations with, and development in, Israel and Palestine.

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- Canada's efforts to promote international human rights includes strong commitments to protecting the human rights and safety of children and youth. We urge Canada to closely monitor and report on the treatment of Palestinian children arrested by Israeli forces and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system, and on the increasing numbers of Palestinian children killed by Israeli soldiers in the occupied territories where a climate of impunity and an almost total lack of accountability persists
- We urge Canada to take a lead in supporting the right to self-determination on the ground in Palestine as we recognize and continue to address the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination in Canada and globally.

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- We urge Canada to take leadership in the international community to end the blockade on Gaza and ensure residents have immediate access to humanitarian assistance and freedom of movement, while affirming the necessary conditions to address Israel's legitimate security concerns.
- We call on Canada to increase funding to UNRWA which provides essential services to millions of refugees, including those in Gaza where 70 percentage are refugees of 1948. In 2020 the Canadian government announced a 3-year, \$90 million commitment from 2020 through 2022, but this funding is not increasing rapidly enough to fill this critical gap. We urge Canada to give \$50 million annually to UNRWA, matching Norway's contribution based on GDP.

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- We call on the Canadian government to continue to take a just, constructive, and human rights-based approach on Palestine-Israel issues, taking into account the extreme imbalance of power between Palestine and Israel and in line with international law and official Canadian foreign policy.
- We urge the government of Canada to live up to the entirety of its existing policies on peace in Palestine and Israel, and to its commitments to International Law and International Conventions.