

PIN Bulletin For Local Organizers

Volume 37, July 2022

***Will you strive for justice and peace among all people,
and respect the dignity of every human being?***



The Bulletin will take a vacation in August!

FINAL REPORT ON THE 80th GENERAL CONVENTION



Inching toward the Tipping Point in the Episcopal Church

Excerpts from a *Mondoweiss* [article](#) by Ruth McRee, a member of the Bishop's Comm. for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land in the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia-Washington.

After 20 years advocating for Palestinian human rights within our denomination, I am encouraged and happy to see that at our General Convention in Baltimore earlier this month my church, The Episcopal Church, passed four resolutions that will empower the church to act on behalf of Palestinians. Briefly, these call for the following:

In [Justice and Peace in the Holy Land – Our Call to Action](#), Episcopalians “recognize the right of the State of Israel to exist and condemn the continued occupation, segregation and oppression of the Palestinian people; recognizing that for Israel to be a democracy it must allow equality for all its peoples.” The resolution further urges U.S. leaders “to take action to oppose Israeli laws and practices that result in unequal rights for two peoples.”

In a resolution titled [Freedom of speech and the right to boycott](#), the church calls on President Biden and members of Congress to “oppose legislation that punishes supporting nonviolent boycotts and divestments of behalf of Palestinian human rights.”

A third resolution, [Conditioning U.S. military aid on human rights](#), reaffirms the church’s longstanding commitment to “...ensuring that U.S. military assistance and arms sales not be used to perpetuate conflict, violate human rights, or contribute to corruption, instability, or violence.” The resolution also calls on the church’s ministries “to oppose U.S. government military assistance, including the sale or provision of arms and related technologies such as surveillance equipment, to countries that have demonstrated well-documented, persistent, and egregious human rights abuses.”

In a separate action, the church’s House of Bishops approved a [resolution](#) registering “alarm at the escalating threat to the Christian presence in the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Israeli radical groups who are actively seeking to undermine the Christian communities of the Holy Land.” Addressing concerns [expressed](#) by the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, the bishops pointed to the “increasing pressure from those who seek to change fundamentally the historic multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious character of the region” and registered their “deep concern for the consequences for the ongoing life of the residents of the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem.” ...

Years of work and witness have led to these most recent actions taken by the General Convention ... But why has it taken so long?

Reasons (not unique to the Episcopal Church) are many: a sense of guilt for the antisemitism practiced by the Church in various times and places; equating the Israel of the Old Testament Bible with the present-day State of Israel; failure to distinguish the unjust Zionism practiced by the State of Israel from theological Judaism which, in fact, requires justice. Another reason is, no doubt, the desire to maintain positive relationships and “open dialogue” between Christians and Jews. Many Americans—Christians and others—are influenced by popular tropes about Arabs being “terrorists” and Jews being “defenseless.” And of course, social considerations often perpetuate the status quo.

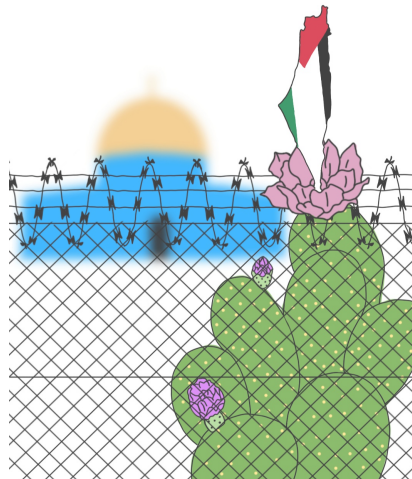
But the work of many in the Episcopal Church—and the detailed reports

of respected international human rights organizations—has led the church to describe the effects of apartheid without using the word.

Asked to describe what comes next, Linda Gaither, Convener of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship's Israel-Palestine Network, said, "We know that three resolutions naming the apartheid in Israel have been sent forward for consideration at the 2024 Convention. They will stay firmly on our radar screen... Two years will pass by in a flash and focusing our work is a high priority."

Ruth McRee concludes:

As an Episcopalian, I am grateful that our church has joined others to call out Israel's injustice and violation of human rights. In doing so, we take up the challenge to be a church that more fully stands for truth, justice and human rights for Palestinians. As we say in this long, slow work, "A step closer to the tipping point which will make a difference for Palestine."



We Are Not Numbers [WANN]: Images by Young Palestinian Artists



AN IMPORTANT NEW RESOURCE:

A Dossier on Israeli Apartheid: A Pressing Call to Churches Around the World

We, members of Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice, have created a theological study for Christians and other civil society organizations who want to learn more about the crime of apartheid and why Palestinians and a growing number of churches and human rights organizations are using the word to describe Israel's oppression of Palestinians.

[Download Full Dossier](#)

Or View in Parts:

Introduction: Dossier on Israeli Apartheid

Part 1: Dossier on Israeli Apartheid : Apartheid Defined

Part 2: Dossier on Israeli Apartheid : Reports & Statements

Part 3: Dossier on Israeli Apartheid : Biblical/Theological Reflection

Part 4: Dossier on Israeli Apartheid : What does the Lord require of
Global Church?

Part 5: Dossier on Israeli Apartheid : The Palestinian Plea

Appendix: Dossier on Israeli Apartheid

A sample from Part 4: Reasons given by churches who admit Palestinian oppression but hesitate to call it apartheid:

"It is not helpful." But words matter. Churches are called to use the word apartheid, whether they find it helpful or not. The word apartheid points—in both its definition in international law and its description of realities on the ground—to a truth. Truth matters, and it matters most when it is named...

"Burns bridges and stops dialogue with partners." It's true. By taking a clearly expressed stand against systemic injustice, bridges will be burned. Treasured ecumenical and interfaith relations may be broken, especially with those who benefit from the status quo. But to seek to be more "diplomatic," to seek conciliatory approaches in a situation grounded in asymmetrical power imposed economically and militarily, is to avoid the harsh reality of Palestinians...

"Should be left to the courts to decide." Some claim that it is not for the church to determine if the crime of apartheid is being perpetrated, that the church should not pre-judge. But there is a Biblical imperative to raise a prophetic voice when an injustice arises. It is precisely the role of the church to hold the nations accountable...

AND, to accompany the Dossier, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Sizer, Church of England, has prepared a Bible study for group discussion accessible here:

<https://peacemakermediators.files.wordpress.com/2021/09/israeli-apartheid-bible-study.pdf>



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Episcopal Peace Fellowship Palestine Israel Network | 2045 West Grand Ave, Suite B, #40058,
Chicago, IL 60612-1577

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