

PIN Bulletin For Local Organizers

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



In June, 2024, General Convention 81 will convene in Louisville, Ky. Once again, Deputies and Bishops will be hard at work: listening, praying, deliberating and voting on resolutions that shape the policy of The Episcopal Church. What happens to resolutions after Convention has voted? How are resolutions put into action? Let's track the career of one resolution supported by EPF PIN in 2018....

The 2018 General Convention adopted six resolutions on Palestine -

Israel. These were among the most progressive passed in over 20 years of advocacy for Palestinian rights. One of the 2018 resolutions, **2018-B016**, called for economic pressure on Israel for its unrelenting human rights abuses committed against the Palestinian people. The resolution called for the development of a human rights investment screen by the national Church's Executive Council Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility (CCSR).

To implement this resolution, Executive Council passed an implementing **resolution** in October of 2019 to establish a global human rights screen, to be applied on companies benefiting from or committing human rights violations against any peoples anywhere. The resolution specifically directed that companies benefiting from or supporting the military occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, be subject to the screen. Additionally, companies doing business in the illegal Jewish settlements were also to be scrutinized for exclusion from the Church's investments.

This policy follows similar resolutions of other mainline churches in focusing on the occupation. In keeping with current Episcopal Church policy, it is not a BDS screen in that it is not directed at Israeli companies generally, but rather at those connected to the illegal occupation, as described in the church's **public communications** at the time. The resolution also allows for CCSR to engage with companies to push for better practices before adding them to the No Buy list.

At the same meeting at which Council adopted the screen, three companies were removed immediately to the church's No Buy list (which also includes military contractors, tobacco companies, fossil fuel companies, and private prison companies). These were Caterpillar, Motorola and the Israel Discount Bank. A year later, two further companies were added: DXC and Leumi Bank. In addition to disinvesting from these companies, CCSR has been engaging a number of companies to end their complicity in human rights abuses in the occupation. These include General Mills, Heidelberg Cement, Trip Advisor and Booking.com. Facebook is being monitored for taking down legitimate Palestinian posts.

At the meeting of Executive Council in Providence in June 2023, CCSR recommended two more companies to be added to the Human Rights No Buy List: Mivne Real Estate and Bezeq Israeli Telecommunication Corporation. Mivne has serious human rights exposure through the company's value chain relationship with the Israel Civil Administration and its ownership and leasing of commercial and industrial real estate in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and Golan Heights. Bezeq also has serious human rights harms through the company's relationship with the Israel Civil Administration and its provision of residential and commercial cellular phone, internet and satellite services in occupied areas. Council approved the addition of these companies to the No Buy List (Human Rights Investment Screen).

CCSR also looked at AXA, SA, which has severe proximity to human rights violations for its investments in several countries, including the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Because the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, the corporate name for the Episcopal Church, does business with AXA, an attempt to engage the company to address its proximity to human rights violations in the OPT and other places will precede any decision to place the company on the human rights screen.

It is worth noting that Council also added Aramco, the Saudi oil

giant, to the No Buy List in 2020, and this month added Daimler Truck Company, Raiffeissen and Southern Copper Corporation. CCSR will also engage Li Ning Corporation and Hilton Worldwide Holdings. These companies together pose human rights risks with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, risks in Myanmar (building on site of a mosque razed by the military junta, with risk of forced labor), complicity against the Uyghurs in China, exposure through a supply chain for forced labor in North Korea, as well as Mexico where Southern Copper has relationships with dubious paramilitaries, private security firms and the Mexican Preventative Police.

CCSR also noted in its meeting in Cleveland last March the need to improve communications of its work to the wider Church. 2021 was the 50th anniversary of the committee's founding, making it a venerable part of the Church's commitment to stewardship of its investments. On behalf of Council it filed the first ever shareholder resolution by a faith community in 1971 when it asked General Motors to leave South Africa. This launched a movement which led to the founding of the Interfaith Center On Corporate Responsibility whose membership now includes dozens of denominations and Roman Catholic religious orders. A video was commissioned to mark the occasion of the 50th anniversary.

Watch the video celebrating 50 years of CCSR's ministry [HERE](#).

Economic pressure through engagement with the corporate world and sometimes divestment remains one of the most effective non-violent strategies to combat injustices, wherever they are found, as evidenced by the anti-apartheid strategy in South Africa. With esteemed human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and B'tselem releasing reports declaring Israel an apartheid state as defined in international law, the need for this ongoing work by CCSR will remain more important than ever.



What is 'apartheid'?

Apartheid is a crime against humanity in accordance with the 2002 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Three conditions must be fulfilled for a practice to be labelled as "apartheid":

South Africa Israel/
Palestine



Two or more racial groups must exist;



The ruling racial group must carry out inhumane practices against the other racial group or groups;



These inhumane practices must be carried out in a methodological and institutional manner by the ruling race, whose objective is to perpetuate this situation.



Currently practiced through laws and other official regulations.

"Apartheid" is a legal term, not an insult or label. It's the most suitable word to describe Israel's treatment of millions of Palestinians over the last seven decades.



The Palestine Project

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