



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**UNITED CHURCH FUNDS ADOPTS EXCLUSIONARY GUIDELINE  
ADDRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**

**CLEVELAND, OHIO** — In its 30<sup>th</sup> biennial meeting, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ (UCC) passed *A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* — a resolution calling for divestment from a named, though not exclusive, set of companies doing business in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). To respond to the calls within the church, United Church Funds (UCF), the endowment investment ministry of the denomination, has adopted a data-based metric for excluding from investment those corporations contributing to human rights violations in the ongoing Occupation.

Since the 2005 General Synod of the UCC called on denominational ministries and investors to use economic leverage — including phased selective divestment — to promote peace in the Middle East, UCF has actively advocated with US corporations profiting from the Occupation, seeking an end to profit-making at the expense of human rights. Over the last decade, the international community has codified the expectations for businesses operating in conflict zones, demanding behavior that accords with international standards for human rights.

“For a decade, United Church Funds has met with corporate executives to seek development of human rights policies governing the Occupied Palestinian Territories that respect and reference international standards,” said Katie McCloskey, Director of Social Responsibility. “While we will continue to engage management of companies with significant business interests in the region, we have recently adopted a policy to exclude investment in corporations whose business involvement in the OPT directly contributes to violations of human rights.”

To accomplish the overarching goal of putting economic pressure on companies profiting from the Occupation, UCF plans to employ its existing screening model — using continually updated corporate research — to identify the companies most complicit in supporting the ongoing Occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

“United Church Funds has heard the outrage of generations of Palestinians living under Occupation,” says UCF President Don Hart. “We have witnessed the abuse inflicted on the people of Hebron, Jericho and Jerusalem. We share their hope that non-violent forms of witness can ultimately bring peace to the region.”

In creating its policy of non-investment, UCF has committed itself to monitoring how corporate policies, practices and contracts impact the human rights of people living under Occupation. A partner for the Just Peace Church, UCF will remain watchful of corporate complicity in human rights abuses long after the news of the current resolution fades from the public sphere.

For over 100 years, United Church Funds (UCF) has served the churches and ministries of the United Church of Christ, and currently manages \$800 million in a family of professionally managed, socially responsible investment funds. In collaboration with ecumenical partners, the UCC helped to found the Interfaith Center for Social Responsibility nearly 50 years ago to use the power of stock ownership to advance the work of justice. UCF seeks to focus its social responsibility efforts on the issues and concerns affirmed by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

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