



## UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

### Report to General Synod 31 (2017) On the Implementation of GS 30 Resolution,

#### **“A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward A Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”**

General Synod 30 (2015) adopted the resolution named above by an overwhelming margin, with more than three-quarters of all delegates supporting the action. The resolution is part of a more extensive body of General Synod policy on Israel/Palestine, dating back to 1967, and is situated among a wide and deep history of General Synod engagement on Middle East issues, and indeed, global issues over the course of its history. This particular resolution was more specific than the General Synod 25 (2005) resolution, “Concerning the Use of Economic Leverage to Promote Peace in the Middle East.” The 2015 resolution includes several resolved clauses, calling the United Church of Christ to act to implement the resolution. Paraphrased, the resolution:

- \* Called upon the UCC to study the *Kairos* Palestine document (2009), and other perspectives on the conflict;
- \* Called upon the various settings of the UCC to divest any direct or substantive indirect holdings in human rights violations arising from the occupation of the Palestinian territories by the state of Israel, including, but not limited to, certain named corporations;
- \* Urged the UCC Board to seek input from stakeholders and to develop and publish standards for faith-driven investment, divestment, and re-investment decisions;
- \* Called upon the UCC to boycott settlement goods;
- \* Called upon UCC Officers and members to persist in advocating with Congress to ensure Israel’s compliance with US law, specifically the US Foreign Assistance Act and the US Arms Export Control Act;
- \* Commended UCC leadership for continuing dialogue with Jewish organizations and called for ongoing interfaith dialogue on this issue to promote peace and social justice and an end to violence;
- \* Called upon the UCC Board to monitor the implementation of the resolution; and
- \* Asked the General Minister and President to provide a report to the whole church on the implementation.

Following the last request noted above, this report is the tangible collation of the many ways various settings of the United Church of Christ have worked to implement this resolution. This report is a collaborative effort of the National Setting of the United Church of Christ and the Central Atlantic Conference to record the steps taken by the many settings. The Central Atlantic Conference was the lead Conference in bringing the resolution to Synod in 2015, the first of several to approve the resolution, and was the proponent of the resolution at Synod, supported by at least ten other Conferences. In winter, 2015-16, the General Minister and President, the Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, requested that the Rev. Dr. John Deckenback, then-Conference Minister of the Central Atlantic Conference, partner in monitoring the implementation of the resolution and reporting on that implementation. The Central Atlantic Conference Board of Directors approved

that request at its spring meeting, 2016, agreeing to undertake that responsibility, with Wider Church Ministries, through then end of 2017 (extendable). Rev. Dr. Deckenback was to have carried that through, but for his untimely passing in July, 2016. The Central Atlantic Conference named the Rev. Marvin Silver, Associate Conference Minister for Justice and Witness Ministries, to assume that portfolio. Rev. Dr. Dorhauer, Rev. Dr. James Moos, Executive Minister for Wider Church Ministries, Dr. Peter Makari, Executive for the Middle East and Europe, have worked with Rev. Silver to follow up on this reporting process, including organizing a special webinar on March 14, 2017, to share an update on implementation for Conference Ministers and other UCC ministry leaders, following a leadership delegation to the Middle East in February/March 2017 to study the context, meet partners, and explore aspects of economic leverage (investment, divestment, etc.).

In addition, the United Church of Christ Board named Yvette Wynn chair of a Task Force for the implementation of the resolution. The task force met twice and recommended in Dec. 2016 publishing on ucc.org the work that has been completed toward implementation.

The attached report is in the form of a grid, listing across the top the various requirements of the resolution, and along the left side, including those settings that have responded to requests sent by Rev. Dr. Moos to report the ways they have implemented aspects of the resolution. The data included in the grid reflects the work and commitment of those settings that reported by the deadline to implement faithfully the calls of the resolution. Surely there are other ways that settings of the UCC have engaged the issue and implemented this resolution. Those would be welcome as well, but were not available in time for this report's deadline.

It is clear that a peaceful and just resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has not yet occurred, despite our prayers and actions. Much work remains to be done, and participation by engaging boycotts and divestment, and advocating for governmental sanctions has drawn the attention of the Israeli government. Education about the presence and witness of the Palestinian Christian community and partners committed to non-violent transformation and resolution of this conflict is a critical way for our church to remain deeply involved. We yearn for the day when peace and justice will prevail in Israel/Palestine, and pray fervently for the people there who suffer, cope, and maintain hope across generations, and over time.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Spring, 2017*



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<b>Resolved action →</b>  <b>Setting↓</b>	<b>“...study thoughtfully the ‘Kairos Palestine’ document...”</b>	<b>“...divest any...holdings in companies profiting from or complicit in human rights violations arising from the occupation...”</b>	<b>“...[UCC Board] to develop and publish standards by which faith-driven investment, divestment, and re-investment decisions will be made...”</b>	<b>“...boycott goods identified as produced in or using the facilities of illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories...”</b>	<b>“...persist in the request to Congress...to ensure that the U.S. aid to Israel violates neither the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act...not the U.S. Arms Export Control Act...”</b>	<b>“...continuing to dialogue with major Jewish organizations and call for ... rigorous dialogue among the three Abrahamic faiths...”</b>	<b>“...UCC Board] to monitor the implementation of this resolution...”</b>	<b>Additional notes</b>
<b>National Covenanted Ministries</b>	<p>Through Global Ministries, <i>Kairos</i> Palestine is promoted and related resources are posted.</p> <p>March, 2016: A special webinar was facilitated as part of the UCC’s media focus on the Middle East, hosted by Global Ministries’ Middle East Initiative, with <i>Kairos</i> Palestine’s executive director presenting the document and the movement, and responding to webinar participants’ questions</p>	<p>As investors through United Church Funds, the Covenanted Ministries have participated in the divestment movement through the efforts of UCF (see below).</p>	<p>Rev. James Moos, as a member of the UC Funds Board, participated in the development of human rights screens (see below).</p>	<p>Nov. 2016: The UCC, with the United Church of Canada, issued an action alert on PayPal, which discriminates by not extending its services to Palestinian merchants</p> <p>May 2016: Advocacy Associate Derek Duncan wrote “Of Blessings and Boycotts” as a Witness for Justice contribution, noting the Synod</p>	<p>Following co-signing the Oct. 2012 letter to Congress on this topic, national settings of the UCC have continued to remain active on this advocacy:</p> <p>Aug. 2015: JPANet Action Alert called for human rights hearings on US aid to Israel</p> <p>Economic leverage action</p> <p>Feb. 2016 and Dec. 2015: Ecumenical letters to the Administration</p>	<p>Continued dialogue with Jewish organizations through the National Council of Churches-National Council of Synagogues table on Pastoral Issues. This table had a deep discussion in Nov. 2016 about issues related to Israel/Palestine .</p> <p>Resources have been prepared for the interpretation of this resolution as</p>		<p>Global Ministries dedicated a special page online to this resolution, resources related to it, and news about it:  <a href="http://www.globalministries.org/resolutions_on_israel_palestine">http://www.globalministries.org/resolutions_on_israel_palestine</a></p> <p>June 2016: The UCC Collegium issued a statement defending economic leverage as a First Amendment right, following the NY Governor’s Executive Action and more than 20 state legislatures considering actions criminalizing the use of economic measures</p>



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				<p>resolution and boycott of products of the settlements.</p> <p>Sept. 2016: Boycotts were noted in the ecumenical statement of a joint NCC/WCC Consultation on Palestine/Israel in which the UCC participated.</p>	<p>and State Department regarding Israeli violations of human rights, and adherence to the US Leahy Law, regarding foreign aid and human rights.</p> <p>May 2016: The UCC joined ecumenical partners in calling for Congress to end military aid to countries in the Middle East, and enact an arms embargo to the region, proposing bolstered diplomatic and development efforts instead.</p> <p>Feb. 2017: UCC joined an ecumenical letter to Congress and the President on I/P including a call for the application of Leahy Law</p>	<p>representatives of various settings speak about the General Synod action with Jewish colleagues and others:</p> <p>“What the UCC General Synod Adopted on ‘Just Peace in Israel/ Palestine’”</p> <p>“FAQ’s” on the resolution”</p>	<p>August 2016: The UCC joined in signing an ecumenical statement defending the churches’ right to use economic leverage to bring peace and justice, citing historical examples</p> <p>Global Ministries has facilitated several trips of UCC leadership to Israel/Palestine, including a Feb./March trip in which UCC PB and UCF leadership participated, to study the situation on the ground, meet partners, and engage questions of economic leverage/investment/ divestment.</p> <p>UCC leadership participated in the April 2016 Atlanta Summit at the Carter Center, bringing together Palestinian and US church leaders in an unprecedented</p>
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					vetting processes consistently.			meeting to strategize on ways to move forward together. The final statement included language related to the appropriate use of economic leverage to promote justice and peace.
<b>UCC Board</b>			The UCC Board adopted guidelines on responsible investing as proposed by the United Church Funds.				The Board reported in a Dec. 2016 letter of the correspondence it has had with the UCC PB and the UCF on their implementation, suggestions for posting information online, and recommendation not to form a task force at this time.	
<b>United Church Funds</b>			The UCF has developed a screen for companies whose operations directly contribute to human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territories.					UCF remains active on the Ecumenical Action Group for a Just Peace in Israel/Palestine—investors seeking to use engagement strategies for corporate improvements, including shareholder resolutions with



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			<p>The UCF has contracted with Sustainalytics to receive their report, “Occupied Territories Involvement Report”; to connect them with Dalit Baum (AFSC, formerly Who Profits); and to “digest” the Human Rights Watch report, “Occupation, Inc.”</p>					<p>several companies, and requests to ensure distinctions between “Made in Israel” and made in the occupied Palestinian territories.</p> <p>The UCF participated in the special Atlanta Summit, which included a final statement encouraging the use of economic measures.</p> <p>The UCF has considered ways to invest in Palestinian opportunities.</p> <p>The UCF’s CIO and CSR officer participated in the Feb. 2017 trip to Israel/Palestine to study the context, and ways to use economic leverage.</p>
<b>UCC Pension Boards</b>		<p>The PB-UCC does not hold direct or substantial indirect investments in the five named companies of the resolution.</p> <p>The PBUCC uses a third-party objective analyst to review</p>						<p>The PB-UCC has made positive investments of non-annuity funds in Palestinian business development on companies in the West Bank, in companies making</p>



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		<p>investments no specifically named in the resolution that may be involved in the occupation.</p> <p>PBUCC annuity plan members in the accumulation phase may choose to invest in the Stable Value and Bond Funds which are free from publicly-traded equity securities companies doing business in the Middle East.</p>						<p>a difference in the lives of Palestinian people.</p> <p>The PBUCC participates in the Ecumenical Action Group.</p> <p>The PBUCC participated and remains committed to the Atlanta Summit process.</p> <p>The PBUCC will continue to engage companies regarding their involvement in the occupation.</p> <p>The PBUCC will continue to provide support and benefit services to mission partners and missionaries in the Middle East, and stand in solidarity and prayer with them.</p> <p>The PBUCC will continue to engage through travel and visits, including participation in the Feb. 2017 trip by the PBUCC CEO and Board Chair.</p>
<b>Minnesota Conference</b>	The Conference Minister invited the Rev. Dr.	A resolution co-authored by our Israel-		This has been published &		The Conference		The Conference passed its own



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	<p>Mitri Raheb, Pastor of the Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, to speak at an event hosted by Mayflower UCC (Minneapolis) in May.</p> <p>The MN Conf. I-P Network has grown and is focusing on education, including a workshop at the Conference Annual Meeting, developing resources for congregational study, and being available to assist in such conversations.</p> <p>Document was studied by a small group within our Conference &amp; met with 2 authors of the Kairos document while in Palestine</p>	<p>Palestine working group and our Finance Committee is coming to our Annual Meeting in June recommending divestment</p>		<p>encouraged in Conference communications</p>		<p>Minster has been a speaker/panelist in two dialogue events with Jewish and Muslim colleagues since 2015, specifically about UCC and MNC resolution and reaction to that.</p> <p>She has initiated conversations with local Jewish leaders following General Synod; participates in an ongoing 8-person Jewish-Protestant dialogue, organized by the Minnesota Council of Churches;</p> <p>Conference Minister has also been growing relationships with Muslim neighbors locally</p> <p>MN Conf. Network has</p>		<p>such resolution in summer 2015, adding a 2-year period of study in the Conference.</p> <p>The Conference Minister led a “Sacred Journey” Conference delegation to Israel/Palestine in January 2017; 11 participated. Since then, most of those members have been actively engaged in sharing the story and/or advocating at our state legislature against a bill that would disadvantage orgs who support BDS and are seeking state grants/contracts.</p> <p>MN Conference I-P Network has grown to include members from several congregations.</p> <p>It is making fair trade Palestinian olive oil available for purchase.</p>
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						planned to schedule events with local Jewish organizations		
<b>Penn West Conference</b>						<p>The Conference Minister has been involved in public witness regarding the resolution following Synod, an article about it in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, and the receipt of a flood of denigrating correspondence at the Conference Office following the vote.</p> <p>The Conference Minister has met with leadership of the Jewish Federation’s Community Relations Council, as well as the Islamic Center of Pittsburgh.</p>		



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<b>Maine Conference</b>	<p>The Associate Conference Minister reported several <i>Kairos</i> Palestine/Bible studies held and written following this resolution:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A three-week “trial” Kairos Palestine Bible Study was held at The Church of Universal Fellowship in Orono, Maine.</li><li>2. An experimental Bible Study for the Maine Conference was held April 28, and May 5/12, 2016. A total of fourteen people participated in this initial three-week study.</li><li>3. A Conference-wide Kairos Palestine Bible Study was offered at the Maine Conference Center in Augusta, representing six different Maine Conference churches. This Bible Study was held June 16/23/30, 2016. Materials were compiled on the Maine Conference website, here:</li></ol>							
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	<a href="http://maineucc.org/kairos-palestine-bible-study/">http://maineucc.org/kairos-palestine-bible-study/</a>							
<b>Southwest Conference</b>		Ongoing monitoring of investments				Advocating for full inclusion of Jewish and Muslims faith leaders in Arizona Faith Network (AFN), a traditionally ecumenical rather than interfaith organization.  Ongoing collaboration with Jewish and Muslim communities of faith and faith leaders for social justice actions in Phoenix, AZ.		Strategy conversation, monitoring and advocacy efforts against legislative initiatives to label BDS-sympathetic organizations
<b>Pacific Northwest Conference</b>				The former leader of Israel Palestine Justice at University Congregational UCC (IPJ) has led an effort for Occupation-Free Seattle. He has	IPJ holds a third Sunday letter-writing campaign, in which we encourage members of the congregation to sign letters we write regarding the situation in Israel Palestine. We	IPJ has purchased and hung a peace banner during Jewish and Muslim religious holidays, including Ramadan, Yom Kippur, etc. We have also posted		In May of 2015, University Congregational United Church of Christ (UCUCC) passed the Resolution, “ <i>A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian</i>



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				<p>worked with the Seattle Human Rights Commission to pressure the City Council to ensure that the City has no investments in companies involved in human rights abuses.</p>	<p>write to our elected representatives, the Secretary of State, presidential candidates, and President Obama. Letters have pressed for equal rights for all, an end to the occupation, and an end to the illegal and inhumane detention of Palestinian children. Letters have condemned the expansion of settlements, expressed solidarity with a local mosque that had been set on fire, drawn attention to a letter that fifteen denominations sent to Congress and the White House, and thanked President Obama for his speech before the UN.</p>	<p>greetings to our Jewish and Muslim brothers and sisters on our message board.</p>	<p><i>Conflict”.</i></p> <p>We also approved <i>Guiding Principles</i> to show our commitment to balance. The guiding principles were initiated by a group of members who had voted against the resolution because they were concerned that it wasn’t sufficiently balanced. The process of meeting together, and listening to one another, was especially rewarding and encouraging.</p> <p>In September 2015, IPJ joined the Kairos Puget Sound Coalition (KPSC), a network of Christian churches and organizations in the Puget Sound region that are working for peace and justice in Israel Palestine.</p> <p>In February 2017, we wrote letters to 28 Washington</p>
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								<p>state legislators who were sponsors of two identical bills that would condemn boycotts. We have since learned that the bills died in committee.</p> <p>In the Spring of 2016, one of our members gave two presentations on her trip to the Holy Land / West Bank. Many friends from the community attended, and learned about the situation.</p> <p>We distribute a <b>monthly newsletter</b>, the <u>PAGE</u>, to keep people informed regarding Israel Palestine. The distribution list contains 100 people who are spread across the U.S., members of UCC churches, but also other churches, and others who don't attend church.</p>
<b>Central Atlantic Conference</b>	Advertising of events in the DC, MD, and VA region related to	Engaged in continued discussions with Pension Boards, UC			The CAC submitted testimony to	The CAC began to compiling a	CAC Board of Directors approved a	Rev. Dr. John Deckenback participates in



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	<p>the issue throughout the Conference.</p> <p>Potomac Association Social Action &amp; Mission Committee offered a small dollar grant program to encourage churches to engage in the implementation of the resolutions. Five entities received grants: People’s Congregational; Plymouth Congregational; Rock Spring Congregational; Rockville UCC; and UCC Palestine Israel Network-Israel</p> <p>At the Conference’s 52nd Annual Meeting (June 10-12, 2016) we engaged attendees in conversation about ways to implement the resolution. Sessions and workshops included: Peter Makari speaking at plenary and a workshop on UCC engagement in the Middle East; a workshop “Intersectionality:</p>	<p>Funds, and UCC Board about implementing resolution.</p>			<p>the Democratic National Platform Committee urging it to include ending the Occupation of Palestinian territories in its platform.</p>	<p>list of current interfaith projects of CAC congregations and have sent out and received responses to an interfaith questionnaire in order to figure out ways to facilitate further the coordination/ structuring of interfaith dialogue in the Conference.</p>	<p>framework agreement for the Conference to play a leading role, in partnership with the National Offices, in monitoring the implementation of the resolution.</p> <p>Marvin Silver participated in webinar for UCC Conference Ministers and staff, March 14, 2017 to provide update on efforts to implement the resolution and recent UCC Leadership Delegation Trip to the Middle East.</p>	<p>the UCC Middle East Delegation Trip with United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ Conference Ministers, representatives of the UCC of South Africa and the United Church of Canada, the UCC and Disciples General Ministers and Presidents, and Global Ministries executives for the Middle East and Africa.</p> <p>CAC Leadership Team formed on this issue and meets monthly to build the network and to engage UCC members in the Conference in implementation of the resolution, primarily from our Potomac Association.</p>
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	<p>Connecting the Dots,” led by Rev. Graylan Hagler; a workshop on BDS-type movements and socially responsible investment/divestment strategies led by CAC PIN Leadership Team</p> <p>The CAC PIN Leadership Team organized a display table to share resources on the issue, including a handout for clergy and local churches concerning step-by-step implementation of the Israel-Palestine GS resolution; Sign-up attendees to the CAC PIN Network; Share information about upcoming events throughout the Conference.</p> <p>An interactive workshop designed for members of congregations in the UCC Potomac Association and other church groups in the Washington DC area</p>							<p>Mobilized UCC pastors and members throughout the Conference to prepare for legislative advocacy for the Palestinian civil society-led campaign for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) and to oppose anti-BDS legislation in VA, MD, and Congress.</p> <p>Worked with Freedom2Boycot and the Virginia Coalition for Human Rights to be mutually supportive, and engaged in advocacy around criminalization of BDS legislation in the MD and VA General Session, and with governor of MD. Rev. Silver testified in the</p>
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	<p>called “Doing Justice, Achieving Peace: Challenging Ourselves to Implement the Exciting New UCC Resolution on Palestine-Israel” was sponsored by Rockville United Church in cooperation with Sabeel DC Metro, and funded by a grant from the UCC Potomac Association, and was held at:</p> <p>** Nov. 5, 2016        Rockville United Church</p> <p>**Oct. 22, 2016 Rock Spring Congregational Church</p> <p>** Dec. 10, 2016        Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ</p>							<p>MD state legislature in Feb. 2017 against proposed legislation.</p> <p>Organized and hosted a Conference-wide conference call to educate churches and pastors about the Conference’s efforts and hopes to work with them on the important issue. Here is a follow-up notice we sent to those who participated:  <b>CAC Toward A Just Peace in the Israel-Palestinian Recorded Conference</b>  <a href="https://fccdl.in/OtNz9vZrH">https://fccdl.in/OtNz9vZrH</a></p> <p>Rev. Deckenback and Southern Conference Minister Ed Davis gave a presentation at the CAC May</p>
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								<p>Board of Directors meeting on the UCC Middle East Delegation Trip of Spring, 2016.</p> <p>UCC Minister and Pastor of Plymouth Congregational UCC, Rev. Graylan Hagler led a delegation of DC Clergy to the Middle East in late 2016.</p> <p>Rev. Marvin Silver participates in the UCC Leadership Delegation Trip to the Middle East, February 19th-27th. Delegation included UCC National leaders including executives from our financial institutions, Pension Boards and United Church Funds.</p>
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