The Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

www.theIPMN.org
Our Mission

- In joyful obedience to the call of Christ, and in solidarity with churches and our other partners in the Middle East, this network covenants to engage, consolidate, nourish, and channel the energy in the Presbyterian Church (USA) toward the goal of a just peace in Israel /Palestine by facilitating education, promoting partnerships, and coordinating advocacy.

- Our network speaks TO the Church not FOR the Church.

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Our Mission Network – theIPMN.org

- Created by General Assembly mandate (highest governing body) in 2004
- Grassroots network with oversight from the World Mission Agency of the PC(USA)
- Completely self-funding through pledges from members
- Governed by a Steering Committee of 14
  - elected by membership at its annual meeting
- Members are from all over the United States
Our Mandate

- Established by action of the 2004 General Assembly, the Israel/Palestine Mission Network encourages congregations and presbytery mission committees, task groups and other entities, toward specific mission goals that “will create currents of wider and deeper involvement” with Israel/Palestine.

- As our mandate calls for, we seek to demonstrate solidarity, educate about the facts on the ground, and change the conditions that erode the humanity of both Israelis and Palestinians, especially those who are living under occupation in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza.
Rev. Dr. Fahed Abu-Akel

Palestine and Palestinian Christians come onto the radar of Presbyterians when Rev. Abu-Akel is elected Moderator in 2002

Moderator of the 214th General Assembly of the PC(USA) June 2002
• Beginning with an overture from a church in Gainesville, Florida, called upon the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI) to gather data to support selective divestment of our holdings in corporations profiting from the Israeli occupation (431-62 vote)

• Condemned Israel’s construction of the “security wall”

• Condemned Christian Zionism as a heretical theology

• Called for studying possible sponsorship of economic development in Palestine

• Established a new mission network to advocate for Palestinian rights (the inception of IPMN)
217th General Assembly - 2006

- Called upon appropriate General Assembly offices to identify affirmative investment opportunities in Palestine

- Clarified the condemnation of the security wall by the 216th General Assembly by saying that the PC(USA) does not presume to dictate to sovereign nations about their national defense, but...

- Supports fair criticism of the security wall insofar as it illegally encroaches into Palestinian territory and is not on the 1967 border (known as “the green line”)
The infamous “I’m sorry” General Assembly

The GA acknowledged that the acts of the previous General Assembly caused misunderstanding among members of the Jewish community

- accepted responsibility for “flaws” in the process, asking for a new season of dialogue
  - Replaced 216th G.A.’s phrase: “initiate a process of phased selective divestment...” to “urge that financial investments of PC(USA) in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank be invested in peaceful pursuits.”

The NY Times reported the outcome of the 2006 GA as the denomination walking back its position on divestment. This is patently false. The MRTI process was only in its infancy; that year the GA changed the language, not the process.
218th General Assembly - 2008

- Affirmed the obligation of the church to speak to governments when it sees violations of God’s commandments

- Endorsed the Amman Call for action, issued by the World Council of Churches
  - A plea from Palestinian Christians: “Enough is enough. No more words without deeds. It is time for action.

- Called for the church to provide resources explaining the PC(USA)’s historic concern for justice and peace in Israel and Palestine
Commended the nonviolent witness of Christians in Palestine and Israel who advocate for fair treatment for them and for their neighbor.

Encouraged pilgrimages and trips to I/P in harmony with PC(USA) principles, including witnessing conditions in the occupied territories, helping to sustain isolated and impoverished local economies, and engaging with Israeli and Palestinian peacemakers.

Approved continuing MRTI process of corporate engagement with companies profiting from non-peaceful pursuits.

- Defined “non-peaceful” pursuits for the work of MRTI

Appointed a Middle East Study Committee to examine and report on the situation in I/P to the 219th General Assembly with recommendations for whole church.
219th General Assembly - 2010

- Approved the MESC report entitled: “Breaking Down the Walls”. The most comprehensive PC(USA) report ever written about the facts on the ground in Israel/Palestine. The report:
  - Acknowledged Israeli human rights violations of Palestinians
  - Called for the cessation of violence on both sides of conflict
  - Called for the end of the Israeli occupation of Palestine
  - Called for the relocation of the separation barrier to 1967 line
  - Called for the withholding of U.S. Government aid to the State of Israel as long as Israel persists in settlement construction
  - Called for shared status of Jerusalem
  - Called for equal rights for Palestinian citizens
Called for cessation of the systematic violation of the human rights of Palestinians through detention, collective punishment, torture, home demolitions and deportation

Called for the resumption of negotiations for a 2 state solution

Commended to the church for study, “A Moment of Truth” (The Kairos Palestine Document).

Appointed a Middle East Monitoring Group to:
- Oversee and insure that report directives were being carried out by denominational offices.
- Write a study guide to “A Moment of Truth” for the whole church
- Collect and edit a resource made up of narratives by at least 4 Palestinian and Israeli peacemakers seeking to end conflict.

Rather than recommend divestment in 2010, in an effort to give CAT more time, MRTI took an unprecedented step and “strongly denounced” them instead, hoping this public statement would bring them to the table wanting to make changes in their policies.
220th General Assembly - 2012

- Defeated a recommendation (from two sources—MRTI and local overture) to divest from Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions and Hewlett-Packard... by 3 votes.

- Encouraged “Positive Investment” in Israel and Palestine.

- approved a blanket boycott of ALL settlement products in an unprecedented 71% vote.

  - Never had a vote to boycott anything been approved by the denomination the first time it was presented to an Assembly.
• Called for a review of General Assembly policy on the 2 state solution.
• Voted to divest from Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions, and Hewlett-Packard
• Called Presbyterians to witness for Palestinian rights and for ending the occupation
• Affirmed occupation-free investing in Palestine
Declared that the IPMN publication, “Zionism Unsettled” does not represent the views of PC(USA)

- But GA voted NOT to censor it from the PCUSA store. Weeks later, it was taken out of the store by national PC(USA) staff, against the will of the GA.

Called attention to the Tent of Nations tragedy

Reaffirmed the PC(USA) stance on the rights of children in Israel/Palestine
222nd General Assembly - 2016

- Advocated for the safety and well-being of children in Palestine and Israel
- Commended RE/MAX for taking measures to not profit from sales in the illegal Israel settlements and called for continued dialogue in that regard
- Passed: “For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace” report on the status of the 2 state solution
 Called for a prayerful study of BDS by the church

 Affirmed nonviolent means of resistance against oppression (the historic BDS actions of the PCUSA)

 Defeated attempt to sever PC(USA) ties with the U.S. Campaign to End the Occupation
How we got to BDS in the Presbyterian Church (USA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Economic actions against the Occupation initiated by Gainesville, FL church, garners national headlines</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Palestinian Civil Society call for BDS</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Organizational Meeting of IPMN, the Israel Palestine Mission Network</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Endorse Amman Call</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Confessional document <em>Kairos Palestine</em> by Palestinian Christians as a cry for help from Christians around the world.</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>219th G.A. called to pressure Congress to withhold military aid (S)</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>220th G.A. (B)oycott of ALL Settlement Products</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>221st G.A. (D)ivest all PC(USA) holdings from Caterpillar, HP and Motorola Solutions</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>222nd G.A. Withstood expected backlash to add anti-BDS language to all I/P policies, and to sever ties with the U.S. Campaign to End the Occupation</td>
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- **Advocacy Strategy:** BDS—One Letter at a Time
- **Education Strategy:** Publications to Inform and Teach the Church

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How BDS Continues in the PC(USA) Coming Years

- Monitor church agencies directed to carry out General Assembly directives—Most especially the latest actions to encourage Prayerful Study of BDS throughout the denomination and affirm the historic BDS stances elsewhere by the church over the past century.

- Intersectionality: Continue to build partnerships with other denominational traditions, as well as faith-based and secular organizations all seeking to promote human rights and freedom in Palestine, as well as in other contexts where peoples cry out for justice.

- Continue the long process of educating a 1.75 million member denomination about why justice for Palestine is important and necessary; including the publishing of additional resources and promoting trips to I/P
IPMN bestsellers in multiple reprints
Palestinian Narratives

Palestine Is Our Home: Voices of Loss, Courage, and Steadfastness

- Edited by IPMN member and treasurer
  - Dr. Nahida Gordon
- Endorsed by IPMN
Partnerships

- Partnerships with PC(USA) Entities
- World Mission Agency—Mission Network Oversight
- Permanent GA Committees:
  - ACREC – Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns
  - Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)
- Moderators and the Stated Clerk’s Office (OGA)
- National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus (NMEPC)
- Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (PPF)
- Presbyterian Voices for Justice (PV4J)
- Chicago Presbytery Middle East Task Force (METF)
- Greater Atlanta Presbytery Joining Hands for Justice (JHJP)
- Growing IPMN local groups, including
  - National Capital Presbytery IPMN chapter
  - Philadelphia Presbytery IPMN Chapter
- San Francisco Presbytery Keep Hope Alive (KHA)
  - Lead 2 trips a year to plant and harvest olive trees
Wider Partnerships
IPMN Endorses Platform of Movement for Black Lives

~April 2016

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.
~ Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.
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