

Survey of PCUSA General Assembly Resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

1948: Affirms rights of both Jewish and Arab Peoples and a resolution through the United Nations: “We believe that a solution to the problem will be achieved only by a return to the principle of faithful devotion to the welfare, needs, and rights of both the Jewish and Arab peoples. ... We prayerfully urge our government to pursue an unwavering policy of moral courage and integrity in dealing with this problem through the agency of the United Nations to the end that the Palestine conflict shall not become the tinderbox for world conflagration.”

1954: Palestinian Refugees: “In view of the last tragic phase of the Arab-Israeli war, which resulted in 750,000 refugees, and in consideration of the progress that peace would bring to all the peoples of the Middle East, we urge the State Department to exert its influence in the United Nations to bring Israelis and Arabs together to end this tragic satiation.”

1967: Support for Peace in the Middle East: “The General Assembly expresses deep concern over the unrest and recent conflict in the Middle East, an area which contains much that is sacred to Christian, Jew, and Muslim alike, and it registers its wholehearted and prayerful support of individuals and nations who are seeking to bring peace and concord to that area of the world.”

1974: Self-Determination for the Jewish People, full Civil Liberties for All Within Secure and Mutually Defined Boundaries; Affirms National Political interests of Israel and the Palestinians: (Affirms) “the right and power of the Jewish people to self-determination by political expression in Israel, based upon full civil liberties for all, should be recognized by the parties in the Middle East and by the international community.... Boundaries of all states in the area should be mutually defined and accepted.... All parties involved should negotiate a shared common authority for a unified Jerusalem that will preserve the integrity of the city; give full expression to the legitimate national political interests of both Israel and the Palestinians.... Protect the legitimate religious interests of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim groups, including free access to all holy places.

1976: Condemned the Exploitation of Religious faith by Conflicting Parties in Lebanon and Israel-Palestine: (Condemns) “the exploitation of religious faith by the conflicting parties.... in the Lebanese and Arab-Israeli conflicts.”

1977: Calls Upon the U.S. Government to Reaffirm Its Commitment to Israel and Support for Palestinian Self-determination.

1978: Recognized the Sadat/Begin/Carter Peace Initiatives and Called on Israel and the Palestinians to Mutually Recognize the rights of each other to self-determination.

1979: Welcomed the Peace Treaty at Camp David; Deplored loss of innocent life through Palestinian raids into Israel and Israel's Massive retaliation; deplored militarization of the Middle East.

1982: (Called) "upon Israel to withdraw all its forces from Lebanon immediately....upon the PLO to cease acts of violence....upon the U.S. "to enter into official contact with the PLO at such time that organization acknowledges the right of Israel to exist within secure and recognized boundaries."

1983: Called upon the U.S. to enforce its stated position against the establishment of Israeli settlements on the West bank, by "denying all forms of aid to Israel as long as that nation persists in creating new West Bank settlements."

1984, '86. '87: Called again for the U.S. government to recognize the rights of the Palestinians to self determination, while affirming Israel's right to exist; supported international efforts to **create an independent Palestinian state** in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

1987: Affirmed the Study on Relations of Presbyterians and the Jewish People: including a reaffirmation that the God who addresses both Christians and Jews is the same—the living and true God; acknowledged that Jews are in a covenant relationship with God; rejected any "teaching of contempt for the Jewish people"; affirmed a willingness to investigate the continuing significance of the promise of 'land' and its associated obligations and explore implications for Christian theology.

1988: "Cease the systematic violation of the human rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories. Specifically, we call for an end to the policies and (or) practices of administrative detention, collective punishment, the torture of prisoners and suspects, and the deportation of dissidents....(Israel must) end the settlements policy and acquisition of land within the occupied territories...."

1989, '90, '91: Continued to call for support of the peace process in Israel-Palestine including participation of the Palestinians and **for Israel to stop constructing illegal settlements** in the occupied territories.

1992: Commends the U.S. President's pursuit of peace through bilateral and multilateral negotiations between Israelis, Palestinians and their Arab neighbors; b. (affirm) "their policies in refusing loan guarantees for Israel until the building of settlements on the occupied territories has come to a halt." Also "Calls for exploration and **investigation of additional ways to reduce feelings of despair and abandonment that the Christian communities in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, and Lebanon** are experiencing..." "Calls for the U.S. government to press for **the end to the Israeli occupation** of southern Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza and for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon." "Calls for reexamination of U.S. practice and policy relating to the sale of arms with the **goal of the demilitarization of the Middle East."**

1994: Reaffirmed previous GA resolutions ('74, '84, '88, '90) affirming the status of Jerusalem; “Renewed efforts to make U.S. aid to Israel conditional upon the cessation of the appropriation of Palestinian land in and around Jerusalem and the establishment of new settlements in the occupied territories....” **Rejects current legislative efforts to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem,** a step that would do severe damage to the Middle East peace process.” **Urged Israel to lift the military closures of Jerusalem** that deny Muslims, Christians, and others access to their holy places....”

1995: Called for Withdrawal of Israeli and Syrian troops from Lebanon; reaffirmed previous resolutions **calling for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,** noting PCUSA concerns stem from 160 years of Presbyterian involvement in the Middle East and concerns repeatedly raised by Middle Eastern Christian partners.

1996: Requested the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to submit a report to the 1997 GA that would **“the issues related to the larger Middle East area with recommendations for appropriate public policies and church involvement.**

1997: Called on US Government to be active in reaching a negotiated peace treaty.

1998: **Noted set-backs to peace process** with assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and policies of the Netanyahu Government in Israel that favored violence and military solutions over “those favoring negotiations.” Called upon the US to monitor Israel’s fulfillment of the terms of the Oslo Accords with regard to continuity U.S. aid to Israel. Specific areas of accountability: **“a permanent termination of (Israel’s) efforts to expand the settlements.”**

2000 peaceful settlement of the territorial claims of Palestinians and Israelis can be achieved only by negotiation: AJerusalem must not belong to a single people but be open to all...

2001: Urged implementation of UN Resolutions 242 and 338; Called upon Israelis and Palestinians to recognize the continuing escalation of violence and move toward a comprehensive negotiated settlement; called upon Israel to “desist from its policy of excessive military force and to signal its commitment to peace negotiation by ending the occupation, which is a form of violence; Calls upon Yasser Arafat to appeal to the Palestinian people “to lay down their arms and stones---as an expression of their unity in seeking to work out a just and enduring peace for their people.”

2002: Urged all parties to end all forms of violence, Implement the Arab League proposal, essentially the same as UN Resolution 242, calling for full Arab recognition of Israel and Israel’s withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. Also affirmed the need for an international “protective force” in the occupied territories; “directs Israel to end the occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza.”

2003: Called for a delegation to be sent to our partner churches in the Middle East and **adopted an extensive resolution calling for “an end to the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem.”** Noted the **“occupation is growing stronger,** and the threat to Palestinian rights,” and referred to Israel’s request for an additional \$4 billion in military aid to Israel that helps sustain the occupation.” Called for a national study and prayer in churches across the country.

2004: 1. **Adopted a Resolution on Calling for an end to the construction of the separation wall** by the State of Israel in the West Bank; 2. **Adopted a resolution on “Confronting Christian Zionism”** as “inconsistent with reformed theology; 3. adopted a resolution affirming support for the Geneva Accord as a Means of moving toward peace between Israel and Palestine; affirmed the steadfastness of Palestinian Christians; reiterated the call for Israel to end the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip now; **condemned the violence and deadly attacks by Palestinian suicide bombers and by the Israeli military;** noted the international community has an obligation to provide physical protection for those under occupation ; and **“Refers to Mission Responsibility through Investment Committee (MRTI) with instructions to initiate a process of phased selective divestment in multinational corporations operating in Israel, in accordance to General Assembly policy on social investing, and to make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly Council for action.**

PCUSA Website: (www.pcusa.org) and link to Middle East Crisis. And Presbyterian Peacemaking Program with link to “Crisis in the Middle East” (www.pcusa.org/peacemaking)