

PETITION TO TORONTO CONFERENCE – PTC1

TITLE:	Seeking peace through justice: ethical investment in the Middle East
ORIGINAL SOURCE:	World Concerns/Social Issues Committee, Toronto South Presbytery
PRESBYTERY ACTION:	Concurrence
CONFERENCE ACTION:	Motion for action CARRIED
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:	Staff and volunteer time related to communications
SOURCE OF FUNDS:	Conference budget
STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:	Staff time to collect and distribute resource documents, publicize this effort through congregations, and refer this petition to Toronto United Church Council, General Council, presbyteries, presbyteries' executives, and any other relevant bodies.
VOLUNTEER IMPLICATIONS:	Participation in research, discussions and action.

WHEREAS The United Church of Canada has committed itself to work with those of all faiths striving for peace with justice in Palestine and Israel.

WHEREAS In January 2001, eleven Church leaders, including the Moderator of the United Church, issued a statement which affirmed the right of Palestinians to exist in peace and freedom in an internationally recognised homeland and state, and the right of Israel to exist in peace and security within internationally- recognised borders.

WHEREAS Kairos' Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, through its Middle East Working Group, in which the United Church of Canada participates, has identified an end to the Occupation as fundamental to achieving a just peace between Israel and Palestine and has identified the settlements as a key obstacle to peace in the region.

WHEREAS the World Council of Churches, of which The United Church of Canada is a member, has designated 2001-2010 as the Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace, and the focus for 2002, the 2002 Ecumenical Campaign to End the Illegal Occupation of Palestine: Support a Just Peace in the Middle East.

WHEREAS as well, The United Church document "To Seek Justice and Resist Evil" focuses on ethical investment as an important tool for working towards justice and for peace.

WHEREAS Canadian Jewish peace groups such as the Jewish Women's Committee To End the Occupation, Yosher, PAJU (Palestinian Jewish Unity), and Jewish Youth Against the Occupation are several of the groups that hold weekly vigils in major Canadian cities in solidarity with Palestinians to protest the occupation. Israeli peace groups and academics have been calling for a boycott to support peace efforts; our action is in support of many voices for peace and justice.

WHEREAS corporate activities that support the settlements contribute to the continued oppression of Palestinians, thereby violating The Fourth Geneva Convention, and countering initiatives by the United Nations [UN Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), recently reaffirmed by the Security Council in Resolution 1322, and UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (1948)]; the World Council of Churches; our global partners, The Middle East Council of Churches and Sabeel Jerusalem; and the United Church of Canada (Division of World Outreach and Toronto Conference motions 2001 to build a

secure and just peace in the Middle East).

WHEREAS the God we worship is a God of compassion, justice and liberation.

WHEREAS recent events have convinced us that both the terror of the suicide bombings for our Israeli sisters and brothers and the horrific treatment of our Palestinian sisters and brothers living under occupation are coming to a climax and causing a crisis in world events.

WHEREAS we want to send a clear message from our denomination to faith partners, governments and corporations.

WHEREAS we must without delay join those who are struggling in concrete ways, in Canada and abroad, for peace with justice in Israel and Palestine.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the World Concerns/Social Issues Committee of Toronto South Presbytery, through Toronto South Presbytery, petitions the 79th annual meeting to Toronto Conference to call on the Presbyteries, churches, mission units and associated bodies (such as the Toronto United Church Council) within its bounds, as well as our membership, to:

- reaffirm the United Church's support for the nation and people of Israel and Israel's right to peace and security within internationally recognized borders
- reaffirm its support for the Palestinian peoples and their right to peace and freedom in an internationally recognized homeland and state
- recognize that the path of peace is dependent on the ending of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, including the withdrawal of Israeli settlements there
- commit itself to:
 - join the World Council of Churches international boycott of goods produced in the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories
 - divest itself of investments in corporations whose activities in the Israeli settlements and/or the Palestinian Territories including East Jerusalem serve to encourage the continued existence of these illegal settlements
 - boycott the goods and services of corporations whose activities in the Israeli settlements and/or in the Palestinian Territories (including East Jerusalem) serve to encourage the continued existence of these settlements
 - direct the World Affairs Committee of Conference to provide resources to assist congregations to take action to divest and boycott goods and corporations related to Israeli settlements in the occupied territories

petition the 38th General Council to endorse the boycott of goods produced in or serving to support the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and the divestment of investments in corporations which support the ongoing illegal Israeli settlements.

Motion for action:

MOTION by David Allen/Laura Turnbull that this 79th annual meeting of Toronto Conference call on the Presbyteries, churches, mission units and associated bodies (such as the Toronto United Church Council) within its bounds, as well as our membership, to:

- reaffirm the United Church's support for the nation and people of Israel and Israel's right to peace and security within internationally recognized borders
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- recognize that the path of peace is dependent on the ending of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, including the withdrawal of Israeli settlements there

- commit itself to:
 - join the World Council of Churches international boycott of goods produced in the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories
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