

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

To the Venerable, the 135th General Assembly:

OVERTURE NO. 6, 2007 (A&P 2007, p. 520-21, 19; A&P 2008, p. 273-81, 18)

Re: Economic advocacy and peace in Israel and Palestine

INTRODUCTION

The International Affairs Committee received Overture No. 6, 2007. The overture requested a statement on the connections we have as Christians and as Canadians with the peoples of Israel and Palestine and the role of economic advocacy measures as strategies in promoting the search for a just peace between the State of Israel and Palestinians.

The committee is mindful of the complexities, deep emotions and history imbedded in this conflict. The committee acknowledges the personal friendships that many in The Presbyterian Church in Canada have in the Jewish community, the Arab Christian community and the Muslim community here in Canada and in the Middle East.

Economic advocacy measures offer non-violent options to support peace with justice in what seems like an intractable conflict; one that has lasted over 60 years. The committee is recommending several options to General Assembly. Some of these were suggested in the interim report to the 134th General Assembly (A&P 2008, p. 273-78), and are summarized in this report, including purchasing products from Palestinian fair trade organizations.

This report considers the implications of goods manufactured or processed in the Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories and exported to Canada under the Canada Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA). As this report was being prepared, the committee did not have detailed information on the type or value of goods from the Jewish settlements. The committee reports on American and Canadian companies that have defence contracts with Israel, or whose business services or goods are used in the Occupied Territories, and whether The Presbyterian Church in Canada holds shares in these companies. The corporations reviewed for this report are involved in defence production or communication technologies.

The 134th General Assembly approved the following recommendation in the International Affairs Committee's report: "That the 134th General Assembly affirm the KAIROS policy opposing both a general boycott of Israeli products and sanctions against Israel" (A&P 2008, p. 280, 18).

The International Affairs Committee affirms that the church is a place for moral deliberation and invites General Assembly to consider the issues addressed in this report as requested in Overture No. 6, 2007.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long must I bear pain in my soul,

and have sorrow in my heart all day long?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

(Psalm 13:1-2)

When disaster and hopelessness afflicted God's people in ancient days, they often expressed their despair through psalms of lament. Jesus quoted Psalm 22 in his cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Such psalms express anger and helplessness, acknowledging a situation beyond our control. The burden of suffering is laid at the feet of God.

As the International Affairs Committee prepared this report, we lament that in Israel and Palestine violence continues, innocent people suffer, homes and cities are destroyed, the hungry are left unfilled, the sick are without care. Efforts of political leaders and mediators have brought little relief, and the best of intentions have not brought about their desired end. We cry out with our brothers and sisters there who see only destruction and death, "How long, O Lord?"

We lament in the spirit of the psalmists who knew at least to address the cry of pain to God, the source of salvation (Psalm 13:5). So, too, our lament will not rest in hopelessness and despair. Despite the tremendous obstacles and challenges, we have hope that is grounded in God's abiding presence in the history of God's people. We see it in God's enduring grace in our church and world. It is realized in our response to God's call and our work for God's reign through our faith in Jesus Christ. And so the broken world has not broken our spirit of hope for a resolution of the current crisis.

People may fail us; leaders may be silent in the face of oppression and injustice but God hears the cries of the oppressed, the wronged and the dispossessed. God is with them. God creates and loves all peoples, regardless of nationality or creed, and wants justice and peace for all (Micah 4:3-4, Isaiah 45:22-23) because the earth is the Lord's (Isaiah 45:18).

This love of God for all stands against all ideologies that carry messages of a nationalism rooted in hatred and of religious exclusiveness. God's unconditional love revealed in Jesus calls humanity to live with mutual respect and harmony with neighbours (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 7:12). God draws us into working for peace and for justice for all, especially the oppressed and vulnerable (Micah 6:8, Luke 4:17-21). Peace is impossible without justice.

The Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation (1954) calls the church to "denounce and resist every form of tyranny" (section 6). Living Faith (8.5.2) declares, "We know that nations have fought in self-defence and that war, at times, may be unavoidable. But the tragic evil that comes with war, the slaughter of men, women and children must rouse us to work for peace." With this in mind, this report moves from lament to action in challenging the powerful through whatever peaceful means are available to us, and in challenging all of us to work for peace.

God's vision of peace with justice moves us beyond oppression, insecurity and injustice in the Middle East. We are called to be agents of peace, not for reasons of personal or national security, but because of our new nature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). We claim Jesus' mission as our own. We recognize that peacemaking is costly and difficult because of human brokenness, but the biblical vision of God's reign informs and guides our efforts for peace and justice. We yearn and work toward the day when God's peace will embrace all people, especially the ones who cry to God for justice. "We pray for peace to him who is the Prince of Peace." (Living Faith, 8.5.3.)

CURRENT CONTEXT

For more than sixty years, periods of open fighting between Israel and its neighbours have alternated with uneasy truces. The conflict was a focus of the Cold War, with the Soviet Union

supporting the Arab nations, and the West supporting Israel, seen by both sides as an outpost of the West in the heart of the Arab world. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to lie at the heart of the tension between the West and much of the Muslim world.

The broad principles on which a peace agreement would be based have long been recognized in United Nations Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolutions 242 and 338. These resolutions were affirmed by the 116th General Assembly (A&P 1990, p. 395-400, 62-63).

Resolution 242 calls for:

1. The withdrawal of Israel from the territory occupied since 1967 and the recognition by all states in the region of Israel's right to exist.
2. The right of all states, including Israel and its Arab neighbours, to live in peace with secure and recognized borders.
3. The right of the Palestinians to self-determination, including their right to establish their own sovereign state.

Resolution 338 was passed by the Security Council during the 1973 conflict and called for an immediate ceasefire, the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242 and the commencement of negotiations to bring about a just and sustainable peace in the Middle East.

Withdrawing from the Occupied Territories means an end to Israeli settlements in the West Bank, all of which must be disposed of or dealt with within a negotiated settlement. An arrangement must be found so that Jerusalem can be shared by the two peoples and three faiths for whom it is a holy city. The question of the 1.5 million Palestinian refugees must be addressed in a way that fairly addresses the concerns of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Despite the fact that the outlines of a peace settlement are known, the peace process in the fifteen years since the Oslo Accord (1994) has borne little fruit. A few limited areas of the West Bank have come under Palestinian control, but given the continuing impact of the occupation and the expansion of the Jewish settlements, Palestinians have grown disillusioned about the promises they have been given. The violent second intifada (September 2000 to October 2004), in which there were a number of suicide attacks inside Israel, resulted from the failure of the Oslo process to deliver real improvement in the lives of Palestinians.

A majority of Israelis have given up on a peaceful resolution to the conflict, and want their government to manage it in a way that gives them maximum security. The failure of former US President Bill Clinton's final effort in 2000 to secure a peace agreement led to Palestinian leader Chairman Yasser Arafat's isolation, the Israelis' declaration that they had "no partner for peace" and to the building of the mammoth security wall to separate the Palestinians of the West Bank from Israel.

This wall has significantly reduced the number of attacks inside Israel, but it has attracted international criticism. In many places the wall is built inside Palestinian territory, thereby annexing land. Many settlement blocks are incorporated on the Israeli side of the wall. At the same time, settlements continue to expand, and Israeli-only access roads criss-cross the West Bank, carving it into ever-smaller enclaves. Checkpoints make Palestinian travel within their own homeland a nightmare of delays, frustration and resentment. This process of dismemberment has gone so far that even former President George W. Bush cautioned Israel that the territory for a future Palestinian state must be "contiguous".

Israel unilaterally withdrew its settlements and its army from Gaza in 2005, but maintained complete control over its borders and economic activities. Within Gaza, external pressure from the Israelis, economic stagnation and lawlessness engendered by rival clans, all contributed to a collapse in civil order, and to the outcome of the 2006 election.

Elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council were held in the West Bank and Gaza in 2006. The long-dominant Fatah party (Chairman Arafat's party) had become mired in inefficiency and corruption. Palestinians expressed their disapproval by giving a clear victory to the Islamist Hamas movement, which had a good reputation for honesty and for providing social services, especially in Gaza, its centre of power.

Hamas is regarded by many Palestinians as the spearhead of the Palestinian resistance. Unlike Chairman Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), it has never renounced the armed struggle for a Palestinian homeland. It is prepared to negotiate, but refuses to begin by recognizing the state of Israel. Instead, it calls on Israel to withdraw from territories occupied since 1967.

The 2006 election was judged both free and fair by observers from the West. However, both Israel and the United States were surprised and dismayed at its outcome. Both declared that a Palestinian Authority dominated by Hamas could never be a partner in the peace process. The US administration's response to Hamas' democratic victory was an attempt to isolate Hamas, and convince the Palestinians that they had made a mistake. Quickly joined by Canada and the European Union, the US rejected the results of the election, and said that they would not deal with Hamas until it formally recognized the state of Israel. Hamas refused. The Palestinian legislature, which had been elected, could not meet, and all dealings with the Palestinians were confined to Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the Palestinian Authority, Chairman Arafat's successor and the leader of Fatah.

Encouraged by other Arab nations, Fatah and Hamas managed to form a unity government after months of difficult talks. This fell apart when the militant wing of Hamas drove out the Fatah security forces and seized control of Gaza in May 2007. Since then, Israel has blockaded Gaza, stifling economic activity and allowing in only the bare minimum of food, medicine and fuel.¹ In the 18 months leading up to the December 2008 conflict, 80% of the population of Gaza subsisted on international food aid.² In defiant response to the Israeli blockade militants in Gaza continued to fire Quassam rockets into nearby Israeli towns. These attacks were met with military reprisals and a tightening of the siege. In June 2008 Egypt brokered a six-month ceasefire, which reduced military activity but left the siege in place.

As the standoff in Gaza dragged on, then President George W. Bush launched the Annapolis peace process. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (elected by Palestinians to succeed Chairman Yasser Arafat as the President of the Palestinian Authority on January 9, 2005) held a series of meetings, and it is reported that the two men came very close to agreement on many of the central points in dispute. But the process collapsed. Mr. Olmert had resigned as Prime Minister, and President Abbas could not deliver on guarantees because he did not speak for Hamas, which had been shut out of the process.

Both sides used the ceasefire in Gaza to prepare for renewed confrontation. Hamas stockpiled rockets, and stepped up smuggling in long range missiles (40 kilometres) from Iran.³ Hamas was determined to end the siege and force the world to engage with it. The Israeli government in turn wanted to punish Hamas for its rocket attacks and force Hamas to end the weapons smuggling. In

the last days of 2008, Hamas stepped up its rocket attacks and Israel responded with a devastating three week assault. The war ended as the two sides declared separate ceasefires.

Amnesty International reports that Hamas forces killed at least two dozen men, in a campaign of unlawful killings, abductions, tortures and death threats against individuals they accused of collaborating with Israel, opponents and critics.⁴ Amnesty International also reports that Palestinian civilians were used by both Hamas and Israeli soldiers as human shields, in violation of international humanitarian law.^{5,6}

As this report was being prepared the ceasefire was holding. Hamas still controlled Gaza and was still able to launch missiles, albeit on a reduced scale. The siege was still in place. Israel had obtained international support to stop the smuggling of weapons. Hamas continued to hold Corporal Gilad Shalit, the captured Israeli soldier. Israel had tied Hamas' demand to reopen Gaza's border crossing on Hamas releasing Corporal Shalit. It seemed that Hamas had gained in stature with Palestinians for standing up to Israel. For many, President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority seemed to be weak and irrelevant.

Meanwhile, there had been a terrible loss of life for Gazans, with approximately 1,400 dead and 5,600 wounded.⁷ Nearly all Gazan government buildings and many private dwellings had been destroyed. Israel suffered 13 dead, soldiers and civilians combined.

The recent conflict in Gaza ended just as the new United States administration of President Barack Obama came to power. Obama has pledged to engage more seriously with the parties involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict than his predecessor, acknowledging that it is at the core of the resentment and anger felt by resurgent Islam towards the West. He immediately dispatched an experienced negotiator, Mr. George Mitchell, to the region to listen to both state and non-state actors.

Regrettably, this listening did not extend to Hamas. This despite the fact that many⁸ believe that including Hamas in peace negotiations is the only practical way forward. Observers, such as former US President Jimmy Carter, point to the resolution of the conflict in Northern Ireland; including the Irish Republican Army in the political negotiations provided it with an alternative to violence. But the essential first step in such a process must be reconciliation or at least a working co-operation between Fatah and Hamas.

As this report was being written, a new sense of engagement from the US administration gives some grounds for hope. At the same time, public opinion in Israel has hardened against making concessions for peace. Palestinians and the wider Arab world saw the carnage in Gaza on their television screens. They noted the apparent inability of Israel's allies to moderate its behaviour and are more enraged and alienated than ever.

A new approach to resolving this conflict is desperately needed.

ECONOMIC ADVOCACY MEASURES

International Humanitarian Law, and Economic Relationships between Canada and Israel

International Humanitarian Law

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) defines international humanitarian law as a set of rules that seek, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects

persons who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities and restricts the means and methods of warfare.⁹ The Geneva Convention and the Hague Protocols are a part of international humanitarian law and include the responsibilities of occupying powers in territories they occupy.

International Law and the Conduct of Economic Activities by Occupying Powers in Occupied Territories.

Adam Roberts states in *International Law and the Administration of Occupied Territories* that “the idea that...an occupying power has a role akin to that of a trustee finds reflection in a number of rules on economic matters, particularly the 1907 Hague Regulations (Articles 48-56).”¹⁰ An occupying power may not transport its citizens into occupied territories (Geneva Convention Article 49), destroy or seize private property (Geneva Convention, Article 53 and Hague Regulations, Article 46), or undertake permanent change in occupied territories, unless due to military needs, or unless undertaken for the benefit of the local population (Hague Regulations, Article 55). It may be argued that, by necessary implication, this prohibition signifies that the occupying power and its citizens may not carry out economic activities in the occupied territory, unless these activities fall under the exemptions outlined in Article 55 of the Hague Regulations.

Over the years, several United Nations (UN) General Assembly Resolutions have addressed the legality of certain economic activities and plans carried out by Israel in the Occupied Territories. From 1973 to 1983, a series of resolutions on “Permanent Sovereignty over National Resources in the Occupied Arab Territories”¹¹ asserted that Israel, as an occupying power, had very limited economic rights in the Occupied Territories, and condemned Israel for alleged exploitation of resources. “All these resolutions reflect the underlying principle that an occupying power, even in a prolonged occupation, has particularly to avoid making drastic changes in the economy of the occupied territory, especially those which are of an exploitative character, or which would result in binding the occupied territory permanently to the occupying power.”¹²

Economic Relationships between Canada and Israel

The International Affairs Committee considered the economic relationship (including trade agreements and contracts for products or services between the Canadian and Israeli governments, and corporations) in light of international humanitarian law. In particular, information was sought about: the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA), defense contracts between the governments of Canada and Israel, and Canadian and American corporations that make products or equipment that might contribute to violations of human rights or that might exacerbate the conflict, and goods produced in the Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories that are exported to Canada under the CIFTA. The committee only comments on the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement in so far as the agreement has a bearing on Overture No. 6, 2007.

In 2008 the International Affairs Committee identified sources to purchase products by Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories (A&P 2008, p. 279). Additional information is included in the “Support and Stand in Solidarity” section of this report (see p. 296), and is on the committee’s website.

Information on Corporations

The International Affairs Committee compiled information from other denominations (such as The Presbyterian Church (USA) and the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church) that are involved in dialogues with corporations regarding their economic activities in

Israel, and from ecumenical partner organizations with expertise in peace and human security issues (such as Project Ploughshares).

A list of 20 corporations is included in this report. This list includes both Canadian and American corporations, some of which have Canadian subsidiaries. These corporations are involved in defence related activities or in communications technologies.

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| 1. CAE | 11. L-3 Communications |
| 2. Pratt & Whitney Canada | 12. Lockheed Martin |
| 3. Presagis | 13. Northrop Grumman |
| 4. Alliant Techsystems, Inc. | 14. Raytheon |
| 5. Boeing | 15. United Industrial Corp. |
| 6. CACI | 16. United Technologies |
| 7. DRS Technologies | 17. Vishay Intertechnology |
| 8. General Dynamics | 18. Motorola |
| 9. General Electric | 19. Caterpillar |
| 10. ITT Corporation | 20. Nortel |

The Presbyterian Church in Canada holds shares in one of the listed corporations, General Electric (GE). At the end of December 2008, the church held 10,000 shares, with an approximate market value of \$197,000.¹³ General Electric, listed on the New York Stock Exchange, supplies the propulsion system for Israel's AH-64 Apache Assault helicopter.¹⁴ It has been reported that Israel's AH-64 Apache Assault helicopters have been used in attacks on Gazan civilians.

On January 12, 2009, Osama Rajab Subuh, provided this devastating first-hand testimony in a telephone interview with B'tselem, the Israeli Centre for Human Rights:

...We walked from the school to the house. The atmosphere was tense, but it didn't feel as if the army [Israeli] was in the area. I saw dozens of people who took advantage of the break and went home to get things. ...After we'd walked back about 150 meters, my son Rajab called and asked me to bring a small gas canister that we had, so we could cook. ...The children stayed in the street. It's a residential neighborhood. I went only 20-30 meters when I heard an explosion behind me. I turned around and saw the children strewn on the ground. I heard the sound of a UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) in the sky. I tried to go and help them, but the neighbors warned me that the plane might fire again, that such things have already happened. I waited a bit, and a few seconds later an Apache helicopter appeared and began to fire in all directions.

The firing continued for more than an hour. We couldn't do anything to rescue the children.

Afterwards, a few of the neighbours' daughters went and reached the children.... It took us two hours to get the children to an ambulance.¹⁵

Mr. Subuh states this took place on January 7, 2009. The use of GE-powered helicopters presented here is cause for concern, and the committee wishes to draw attention to the devastating consequences they can have on civilian populations.

Recommendation No. 1 (adopted, p. 18)

That the Moderator of the 135th General Assembly write to General Electric to inquire about the use of the Apache helicopters in the Occupied Territories, and to express concern about

the apparent use of the Apache helicopters in attacks in densely populated civilian areas in Gaza on January 7, 2009, as reported to B'Tselem: The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories.

The Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement

Canada and Israel signed a Free Trade Agreement that came into effect January 1, 1997. Israeli enterprises in settlements in the West Bank may export goods labelled “made/grown in Israel” to the Canadian market, benefiting from the free trade agreement.

In 2007, Canada and Israel celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA), which has resulted in increased two-way trade and investment as well as research and technology co-operation. Canada’s bilateral merchandise trade more than doubled from \$567 million in 1997 to a record level of almost \$1.4 billion in 2007 (\$426.6 million in Canadian exports to Israel; \$959.3 million in imports from Israel).¹⁶ Israel is Canada’s fourth largest merchandise export market in the Middle East and North Africa. The CIFTA is a goods-only agreement. Canada’s top exports to Israel are machinery, electrical machinery, paper and newsprint, plastics, wood, and aluminum. Canada’s top imports from Israel are electrical machinery, pharmaceutical products, precious stones and metals, machinery, organic chemicals and optical equipment.

The CIFTA now includes provisions whereby Canada grants duty-free access to Israeli exports of cut roses, fresh cherry tomatoes, fresh lettuce, fresh peppers, prepared tomatoes and tomato juice, frozen baby carrots, cubed Ein Dor melons in syrup and other food preparations.

A Comparison of the CIFTA to other Free Trade Agreements concluded by Israel

As is the case with trade agreements between states, the CIFTA is silent on the observance of international human rights obligations assumed by each of the parties. However, Article 1.2(2) provides that the provisions of the agreement shall be interpreted and applied in accordance with applicable rules of international law. There are no indications that the scope of “applicable rules of international law” is, in any way, limited in the agreement, and so either party may technically seek redress under the agreement if it was determined that goods exported were produced by the exporting country in apparent breach of international law.

Under Article 5, a manufacturer of goods for which preferential tariffs are sought under the CIFTA must complete a Certificate of Origin within the territory of the exporting country. An exporter of such goods must also make a written declaration based on the Certificate of Origin that the good qualifies as an originating good (i.e. originating from the territory of the party concerned). Territory is defined in Article 1.4(1)(a) with respect to Israel as the territory where its customs laws are applied. Thus, insofar as Israeli customs laws are applied to the Occupied Territories, goods produced by Israeli entities in the Occupied Territories are eligible for preferential tariff treatment under the CIFTA. This is very similar to the situation under the US-Israel Free Trade Agreement. However, the European Union, in its free trade agreement with Israel, no longer grants preferential treatment to goods originating from Israeli settlements in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, or the Golan Heights.

As this report was being prepared, the International Affairs Committee did not have information on goods made in the Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories and exported under the CIFTA.

Over the years efforts have been made to amend the CIFTA Implementation Act in Canada so that goods originating from the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories are not accorded the same preferential treatment as goods originating from Israel proper under the CIFTA. These efforts have been based on the belief that Israel should not benefit (through trade agreements) from its activities in the Occupied Territories. A Private Members' bill was initially introduced in the House of Commons during the 1st Session of the 37th Parliament on April 10, 2002. The bill did not proceed beyond the first reading and it was subsequently reintroduced in the 2nd and 3rd Sessions of the 37th Parliament. The bill was introduced for the last time in the 1st Session of the 38th Parliament on February 9, 2005. It has not gone beyond the first reading in the House of Commons.

During an address by the then federal Minister of International Trade, on the occasion of the second reading of the bill to amend the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement, The Hon. Art Eggleton stated: "Let me clearly state that while the Agreement is between Canada and the government of Israel, we intend to extend the same benefits to the Palestinians."¹⁷

In February 1999, the Government of Canada entered into the Joint Canadian-Palestinian Framework for Economic Cooperation and Trade Between Canada and the Palestinian Liberation Organization on Behalf of the Palestinian Authority. Fair trade products are exported to Canada from the Occupied Territories. The committee does not know if these goods benefit from the Economic Cooperation and Trade agreement or the CIFTA, or what other goods and services are traded between Canada and the Palestinian Authority.

The Ministry of International Trade website indicates that trade between Canada and Palestinian Authority is modest,¹⁸ and listed no data on trade or investments.¹⁹

The Canadian government has a long-standing policy of support for United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and Canada has a free trade agreement with Israel. CIFTA includes goods produced in Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories which appears to be at variance with Canada's stated position that Israel return territory captured since 1967.

Recommendation No. 2 (adopted, p. 18)

That the Moderator of the 135th General Assembly write to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Trade requesting information on what steps have been taken to stimulate trade between Canada and territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority (the West Bank and East Jerusalem).

In its free trade agreement with Israel, the European Union no longer grants preferential treatment to goods originating from Israeli settlements in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, or the Golan Heights. The committee recommends to the government of Canada that a similar clause be included in the CIFTA.

Recommendation No. 3 (adopted, p. 18)

That the Moderator of the 135th General Assembly write to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Trade urging the Government of Canada to: 1) introduce a certification of origin to ensure that products produced in territories occupied since 1967 are excluded from CIFTA; and 2) ensure that neither Israeli nor any Canadian policy impedes trade relationships between Canada and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Suggested Actions and Resources for Individuals and Congregations

Moving from lament to action as God's people called to work for peace with justice, the International Affairs Committee offers the following suggestions.

Pray

Pray for peace in the Holy Land on the International Day of Prayer for Peace, September 21st. Pray for all groups and organizations working for peace in the Middle East – Christian, Jewish and Muslim – Palestinian and Israeli. The list below includes information on partners of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Additional organizations are listed under “suggested reading” at the end of this report.

- Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre is a partner organization of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. It is an ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement. Inspired by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, Sabeel seeks to deepen the faith of Palestinian Christians, promote unity, justice and love. Sabeel works to promote a more accurate international awareness regarding the identity, presence and witness of Palestinian Christians and their concerns. One of the many activities of Sabeel includes creating various opportunities for Christians, Jews and Muslims to dialogue together about their life experiences, faith and concerns for justice and peace.²⁰
- Bat Shalom (Jerusalem) is an organization of ‘women with a vision for a just peace’ that works with the Palestinian group Jerusalem Centre for Women for a resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.²¹
- The Middle East Council of Churches – Department of Service for Palestinian Refugees.
- The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine is a program developed by the World Council of Churches that ‘seeks to support local and international efforts to end the Israeli occupation and bring a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a just peace based on international law and relevant UN resolutions’.

Support and Stand in Solidarity

The Presbyterian Church in Canada, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives and other KAIROS members have long promoted fair trade products such as coffee which encourage a just distribution of resources and provide an opportunity to learn about fair trade. Promoting Palestinian fair trade products is a means of showing economic solidarity with Palestinians and providing an opportunity to learn about the conflict and about the efforts to seek peace.

These organizations in the Holy Land have information on their products and services online:

- Zatoun organization (www.zatoun.com)
- Holy Land Handicraft Cooperative Society (www.holyland-handicraft.org)
- Holy Land Artisans (holylanartisans.tripod.com)
- Alternative Tourism Group from Ramallah (www.atg.ps)

For information on fair trade products and where they are available for purchase in Canada, TransFair Canada's website is www.transfair.ca. Transfair Canada monitors and certifies fair trade products available in Canada.

Some products from the above listed organizations are available at Ten Thousand Villages stores whose website is www.tenthousandvillages.ca. Ten Thousand Villages is a not for profit, fair trade organization and is a program of the Mennonite Central Committee.

Four Corners is a project of Canadian Lutheran World Relief. They sell olive wood items and silver jewellery from artisans in the Christian communities of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour in the West Bank. Purchases of these handcrafts support the artisans and their families as they struggle to survive amid the violence and uncertainty in their communities. Visit www.clwr.org/How-You-Can-Help/host-a-four-corners-sale.cfm for more information, and store locations.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) maintains an excellent list of many organizations through which fair trade products from Palestine can be purchased: www.pcusa.org/worldwide/israelpalestine/products.htm.

Additional Learning Opportunities

Learn more about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These are some resources for courts of the church to consider:

- In June 2008 Ms. Laura Ashfield and Ms. Margaret Evans attended the Sabeel International Youth Conference in Jerusalem. They are available to speak to courts of the church. Their participation was sponsored by International Ministries, PWS&D and the Mission Interpretation Office. Contact the Program Co-ordinator of the Mission Interpretation Office for information.
- Read material from the suggested reading list following the conclusion of this report, and consult the list of suggested resources from the committee's report to the 134th General Assembly (A&P 2008, p. 281).
- Initiate activities in your congregation and local community to raise awareness. Local connections may be made with the Canadian Friends of Sabeel network (www.sabeel.ca).

Visit the Holy Land

The Holy Land is not only the birthplace of our faith but the current home of some of the most ancient Christian communities in the world. Hear the yearning expressed in the words of Father Elias Chacour, who founded a high school and a college near Nazareth: "You Westerners have been coming to the Holy Land for centuries to visit the shrines, the dead stones. But you do not see the living stones – the human beings who live and struggle before your eyes. I say 'Wake up!' What matters are the living stones!"²²

The 134th General Assembly considered the following recommendation from the International Affairs Committee report (A&P 2008, p. 18):

That the 134th General Assembly highlight visits to the Holy Land sponsored by the Sabeel: Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem as an opportunity for reflection and study and to visit with partners in Israel and Palestine.

During the discussion of the report, a commissioner expressed concern that the Sabeel document “Contemporary Way of the Cross: a Liturgical Journey Along the Palestinian Via Dolorosa” contained anti-Semitic content, and the recommendation was defeated. The International Affairs Committee has since reviewed this document, and believes that it contains no anti-Semitic content. Sabeel continues to be a partner of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Recommendation No. 4 (adopted, p. 18)

That congregations and individuals consider visits to the Holy Land sponsored by the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem, Holy Land Living Stones Pilgrimage (The Holy Land and Christian Ecumenical Foundation), or The Society for Biblical Studies as an opportunity for reflection and study and to visit with partners in Israel and Palestine.

CONCLUSION

Living Faith (8.4.3, 8.5.3) reminds us of our responsibilities as Christians to marginalized and vulnerable people:

Justice involves protecting the rights of others.
It protests against everything that destroys human dignity ...
We affirm that God is at work when people are
ashamed of the inhumanity of war
and work for peace with justice.

Trade between Canada and Israel is growing under the CIFTA. The Presbyterian Church in Canada does not support a general boycott or sanctions against Israel. The committee comments on the CIFTA as it pertains to Overture No. 6, 2007. However, the committee wishes to highlight activities that may contribute to the violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, and exacerbate conflict.

The committee lacks documentation on goods that are made in the Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories, and exported to Canada under the CIFTA. The committee is recommending that the Government of Canada exempt these goods from the CIFTA.

It is unclear how Palestinians benefit from the CIFTA, and what steps have been taken by the Government of Canada to fulfill its commitment that the CIFTA should benefit Palestinians.

The committee identified companies that have defence contracts with Israel and/or manufacture communication technologies that may be used to enforce the occupation of the Palestinian territories. As a shareholder in General Electric, The Presbyterian Church in Canada has an opportunity to express its concern about the tragic consequences of the use of the Apache helicopters in Gaza that are powered by GE engines.

The church prays for those in Israel and Palestine who yearn and work for peace and justice in the Holy Land. As these issues are considered, the prophet Micah’s words are recalled: “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8).

Recommendation No. 5 (adopted, p. 18)

That the prayer of Overture No. 6, 2007 be granted in terms of this report.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

1. The *Presbyterian Record*, articles by Doug Lackie. In 2007 Doug Lackie visited the Holy Land through the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program for Palestine and Israel, a project of the World Council of Churches of which The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a member. Program participants are witnesses to human rights violations as outlined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the fourth Article of the Geneva Convention.
2. International Affairs Committee Report, 134th General Assembly, A&P 2008, p. 273-81.
3. "Economic Advocacy Measures: Options for KAIROS Members for the Promotion of Peace in Palestine and Israel", KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, January 7, 2008, www.kairoscanada.org.
4. *Tikkun*, May/June 2008 edition, www.tikkun.org. Tikkun (Hebrew for healing) is a bi-monthly magazine dedicated to healing and transforming the world. Its editor is Rabbi Michael Lerner.
5. "Church and Society", July/August 2006 edition, The Presbyterian Church (USA).
6. "Time for Justice! 2008", bulletin inserts from Justice Ministries, www.presbyterian.ca.
7. Weaver, Sonia, "What is Palestine-Israel? Answers to Common Questions", Mennonite Central Committee, Waterloo: Herald Press, 2007.
8. B'Tselem: The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, www.btselem.org/English.
9. Amnesty International, www.amnesty.org.
10. International Committee of the Red Cross, www.icrc.org.
11. "The Cradle of Our Faith: The Enduring Witness of the Christians of the Middle East", Louisville: The Presbyterian Church (USA), 2008.
12. *Haaretz*, a daily Israeli newspaper, www.haaretz.com.
13. Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre, www.sabeel.org.
14. Bat Shalom, www.batshalom.org.
15. Jerusalem Centre for Women, www.j-c-w.org.

ENDNOTES

1. "Middle East Policy Briefing No. 26", International Crisis Group, January 5, 2009, www.crisisgroup.org.
2. "Gaza Humanitarian Situation Report", United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, January 2, 2009 as of 14:30, www.ochaopt.org.
3. "Fuelling Conflict: Foreign Arms Supplies to Israel/Gaza", Amnesty International briefing, p. 33, www.amnesty.org. The rocket listed in this report is the 220mm Fajr-3 with a range of 40 kilometres. Amnesty International states that the rockets are of Iranian origin.
4. "Palestinian Authority: Hamas' deadly campaign in the shadow of the war in Gaza", Amnesty International media briefing, February 10, 2009, www.amnesty.org.
5. Article 24 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states that "The presence of a protected person [in this case, civilians] may not be used to render certain points or areas immune from military operations."
6. "Gaza civilians endangered by the military tactics of both sides", *Amnesty International*, January 8, 2009, www.amnesty.org.
7. "Gaza: political action needed to resolve humanitarian crisis", International Committee of the Red Cross, news release January 23, 2009, www.icrc.org.
8. See "Peace will be achieved only by talking to Hamas", *Times Online*, February 26, 2009, www.timesonline.co.uk.
9. See "What is International Humanitarian Law?", International Committee of the Red Cross fact sheet, July 31, 2004, www.icrc.org.

10. Roberts, Adam, "Prolonged Military Occupation: The Israeli-Occupied Territories 1967-1988", in Emma Playfair, ed., *International Law and the Administration of Occupied Territories*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 68.
11. See for example: UNGA Resolution 3175 (XXVIII) (December 17, 1973); UNGA Resolution 32/161 (December 19, 1977); and, UNGA Resolution 38/144 (December 19, 1983).
12. Roberts, op. cit., p. 69.
13. February 24, 2009, correspondence with Chief Financial Officer of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
14. "Divestment Task Force, Report and Recommendations", New England Conference of the United Methodist Church, June 2007, www.neumc.org.
15. Statement from Mr. Osama Subuh, "Testimony: 10 year-old lost his eyesight in a bombing in which a friend was killed and another wounded, Gaza Strip, January 09," B'Tselem: The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, telephone interview, January 12, 2009, www.btselem.org.
16. Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, www.international.gc.ca.
17. Notes for an Address by the Hon. Art Eggleton Minister for International Trade, on the occasion of the second reading of the Bill to amend the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement, October 9, 1996, www.international.gc.ca.
18. "Canada-West Bank/Gaza Strip relations", Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, August 2008, www.international.gc.ca.
19. "West Bank and Gaza", Trade and Investment (2008), Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, www.international.gc.ca, accessed March 5, 2009.
20. Sabeel is a partner of both KAIROS and The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
21. Bat Shalom and the Jerusalem Centre for Women are partners of The Presbyterian Church in Canada through KAIROS.
22. Quoted in "Holy Land pilgrims: in search of living stones – alternative tours in Israel-Palestine", by Trudy Bush, Christian Century, July 17, 1996, www.findarticles.com.

APPRECIATION

The committee wishes to express its appreciation to Mr. Douglas Sinclair and The Rev. Dr. Roberta Clare who have completed two three year terms.

ADDITIONAL MOTION (A&P 2008, p. 25)

The following additional motion was referred by the 134th General Assembly to the International Affairs Committee to consult with the Committee on Church Doctrine:

that given that the World Council of Churches has designated this week as a Week of Action for Peace in Palestine and Israel, and given that next year marks the 500th anniversary of John Calvin's birth, that this Assembly repudiate any version of Christian Zionism that implies a two covenant theology, and that it affirm Calvin's conviction (based on Paul) that, in the works of the Westminster Confession of Faith (VII, 6) there are not two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same and under various dispensations.

On behalf of the International Affairs Committee, The Rev. Dr. Ron Wallace consulted with The Rev. Karla Wubbenhorst of the Committee on Church Doctrine. It is the view of the International Affairs Committee that the important theological questions contained in the motion will be given attention in the forthcoming report on supersessionism from the Committee on Church Doctrine

(see p. 243, 26). The Committee on Church Doctrine will submit its report at a future General Assembly.

E.M. Iona MacLean
Convener

Stephen Allen
Secretary