

The Presbyterian Church (USA): Israel/Palestine Policy Positions

Summary:

The Presbyterian Church of the United States of America (PCUSA) had their 223rd General Assembly on June 16 to June 23, 2018 in St. Louis, Missouri. The General Assembly is the governing body of the PCUSA and meets every 2 years. The General Assembly has many responsibilities-- from setting policies-- for the denomination to overseeing its agencies to carry out their work. In relation to Israel/Palestine, the denomination has been active since 1948. According to [The Presbyterian Mission Agency](#), regarding Israel-Palestine, "The Presbyterian position has consistently been to affirm the right of Israel to exist as a sovereign state within secure, internationally recognized borders and the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, including the right to the establishment of a neighboring independent, sovereign state toward the end of establishing a just and durable peace." Below are the various decisions related to Israel/Palestine passed at General Assemblies beginning in 2006.

On Palestine...

2014: 04-06 Affirm the PCUSA commitment to invest in the West Bank to help support the rights of Palestinian people and their economy and identify ways of engaging in occupation-free investments.

2018: 12-03 Direct PCUSA staff and networks to work in ecumenical solidarity for justice for the Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel, refugee camps and diaspora.

On divestment and economic pressures...

2006: 11-01 Acknowledge the 2004 General Assembly actions that hurt and created misunderstanding in the Jewish community and urge PCUSA financial investments in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank are in peaceful pursuits and are consistent with the corporate engagement process of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investments.

2006: 11-16 Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate with corporations doing business in Israel and Palestine to ensure equal employment opportunity and workplace diversity, refer to internationally recognized human rights and labor standards in the business's code of conduct and policies, promote policy and economic development in order to seek peace and respect human rights in Israel and Palestine.

2008: 11-27 Urge corporations doing business in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank to refrain from supporting violent acts and instead seek ways to promote human rights and peace.

2010: 14-03 Approve the Report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment of Its Engagement with Corporations Involved in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank and urge corporations to promote respect for human rights, peace building and equal employment opportunity.

2012: 15-02 Call nations to prohibit import of products made by enterprises in Israeli settlements on Palestinian land and for the boycott of all products from AHAVA Dead Sea Laboratories Beauty Products and other companies.

2012: 15-11 Call the PCUSA to pursue a course of action to the current realities of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that will make a difference on both sides and foster peace in the region. Instruct the General Assembly Mission Council to raise funds for investment in the West Bank by the 2014 General Assembly.

2016: 08-04 Urge RE/MAX to do legally and morally stop its involvement in selling and renting property in Israeli settlement colonies in East Jerusalem and the West Bank and ensure that the company will not receive income from these activities.

2016: 08-07 Study the Palestinian BDS movement against Israel and the resources that oppose the movement and instruct the Stated Clerk to distribute this study to all PCUSA congregations.

2018: 12-01 Defend the constitutional rights protected under the First Amendment for all U.S. citizens, organizations and companies. Oppose U.S. legislation that penalizes those involved in BDS activities.

2018: 12-07 Urge RE/MAX, LLC to stop its involvement in selling and renting property in the Israeli colonial settlements.

On the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories...

2010: 14-04 On Recognition that Israel's Laws, Policies, and Practices Constitute Apartheid Against the Palestinian People - Answered with action taken on resolution 14-08 and comment on the term "apartheid" as hampering dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians.

2018: 12-05 Urge PCUSA members and staff to reach out to Jewish partners and discuss the Israeli occupation of Palestine in an open dialogue.

On peacemaking/solution...

2008: 11-01 Affirm the church obligation of speaking to governments that violate the commandments of God. Endorse the World Council of Churches' "Amman Call" and its call for a two-state solution, shared Jerusalem and respect for human rights.

2008: 11-06 Encourages PCUSA members and entities to be nonpartisan advocates for peace for Israelis and Palestinians that face violence.

2008: 11-28 Request the 2008, 2006 and 2004 General Assemblies to create a committee of PCUSA members to study the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the context of the Middle East and make recommendations.

2010: 14-08: "Breaking Down the Walls" - From the Middle East Study Committee - Affirm human rights, moral principles, previous General Assembly policies and statements, urge for actions towards peace in Israel, Palestine, Jerusalem and for the broader Middle East, address the U.S. government and raise concern for Christians in the region.

2014: 04-01 Review and examine the viability of the two-state solution or find alternate solutions to the conflict for the General Assembly to support.

2014: 04-04 Recognize Israel's right to exist as a sovereign nation, commit to a two-state solution with Israel and a secure Palestinian state, affirm economic measures and cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians and urge all churches to consider investment in the region that will foster peace for the people.

2014: 04-10 Affirms that *Zionism Unsettled* does not represent the views of the PCUSA.

2014: 04-11 Condemn the Israeli military bulldozing trees and grapevines on the Daoud Nassar family's land in the West Bank and endorse legal efforts to protect the Tent of Nations.

2014: 04-13 Request the Stated Clerk to call the diverse interfaith community and PCUSA partners to participate in a prayer for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine.

2016: 08-06 Stand with the people of Israel and Palestine and affirm their rights to exist as sovereign nations.

2018: 12-02 Affirm PCUSA support for the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, urge the Office of General Assembly to call on the U.S. to urge Israel to abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and call on the U.S. to rejoin the United Nations Human Rights Council.

2018: 12-11 Celebrate reconciliation efforts by Palestinians and Israelis and direct the PMA to identify grassroots organizations that work towards radical and systematic change.

On military aid, investigations and violence...

2010: 14-09 - Commit to security, justice and peace for Israelis and Palestinians and to support the U.S. government to vet funds to foreign countries to ensure their consistency with international law.

2010: 14-10 - Encourage the U.S. government to work on peace negotiations between the PA, Hamas and Israel.

2018: 12-10 Express grief for the Palestinian families of those killed in the Great March of Return at the Gaza border and urge the U.S. and international community to support human rights for Israelis and Palestinians.

On human rights...

2014: 04-09 Support the establishment and protection of equal human rights for all inhabitants in Israel, the occupied territories, with Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza and encourage open discussion on Palestinian human rights, with inclusion of Jewish, Muslim and Christian perspectives.

2014: 04-12 Reaffirm PCUSA commitment to human rights of children, especially in Israel and Palestine.

2016: 08-02 Affirm PCUSA support for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and call for the PA, Hamas and Israeli government to stop the violence against children.

On Jerusalem...

2018: 12-08 Direct the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, with the Office of the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations to create a report on the United Nations' status of Jerusalem for the 2020 General Assembly.

On Christians in the Middle East...

2006: 11-40 Recommends that each church and presbytery to celebrate one Week of Prayer and Witness with Christians in the Middle East.

2016: 08-03 Recognize and affirm the presence of Christians and churches in the Middle East.