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TITLE: APPROACHING GENERAL CONVENTION CONCERNING DISCRIMINATORY RULE
OVER PALESTINIANS IN ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

RESOLVED: that the 240th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania submits the following resolution, "A Call for Ending Apartheid Against Palestinians," to the 81st General Convention of the Episcopal Church.

A Call for Ending Apartheid Against Palestinians

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 81st General Convention acknowledge that Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and B'Tselem Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories report that Israel's entrenched discriminatory rule over Palestinians amounts to the international wrong of apartheid; and be it further

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention join the Presbyterian Church USA, United Church of Christ, the New England and Oregon-Idaho Conferences of the United Methodist Church, and Disciples of Christ in naming the aforementioned policies and practices against the Palestinian people to be apartheid, a crime against humanity; and be it further

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention call on the Office of Government Relations to represent ending Israel's apartheid as a policy priority of The Episcopal Church and to influence policy and legislation on this issue.

EXPLANATION:

1. Recent reports from [B'Tselem Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories](#) (2021), [Human Rights Watch](#) (2021), and

[Amnesty International](#) (2022), along with statements by United Nations officials, declare that the government of Israel practices apartheid against the Palestinian people under its authority.

2. Israeli apartheid is not a recent development. From the very beginning of its statehood, Israel passed laws to discriminate against its non-Jewish citizens. Beginning with the 1950 Absentees' Property Law and 1953 Land Acquisition Law, [more than 65 laws](#) passed over ensuing decades result in displacement, dispossession, and discrimination against Palestinians in Israel in ways from citizenship rights to the right to political participation, land and housing rights, education rights, cultural and language rights, religious rights, and due process rights during detention. This institutionalization and legalization of separate and unequal laws reached its zenith with the [2018 Nation State Law](#) that reserves the right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel solely to the Jewish people and establishes that immigration leading to automatic citizenship is exclusive to Jews, negating the Right of Return of Palestinian refugees. The Nation State Law is a Basic Law. With no constitution, Basic Laws in Israel have legal standing akin to constitutional authority.

3. But this system of legally enshrined Jewish supremacy within Israel is only one part of the ongoing systematic and systemic oppression that constitute apartheid. At its heart, apartheid (from the Afrikaans word meaning separateness) is about separating peoples, as in the harsh discriminatory system imposed by White South Africa on its Black population. The same principle has been applied in the Zionist settler-colonial vision of Jewish supremacy that began in the early 20th century and culminated in the state of Israel. Separateness is not only physical, but also accomplished through access to rights and basics of livelihood. Throughout the state of Israel, in the occupied territories, including the Gaza Strip, and reaching even into the diaspora of Palestinian refugees, Israel has implemented laws, practices, and policies that have created and maintained an institutionalized regime of systematic separation, oppression, and domination over Palestinians, enforced through discriminatory laws, policies and practices. When seen as a totality, as in the view of the several human rights groups referenced earlier, the system controls virtually every aspect of Palestinians' lives and routinely violates their human rights. According to the Amnesty International report, this

apartheid regime manifests and is enacted through territorial fragmentation and legal segregation; use of military rule to control and dispossess; denial of nationality, residence and family life; restrictions on movement; restrictions on right to political participation; dispossession of land and property; discriminatory planning and zoning policies; and suppression of Palestinians' human development.

4. Apartheid is not a matter of opinion, or a political position that one may choose or reject; it is a matter of law. Statutes and criteria are enshrined in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (Apartheid Convention) and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Rome Statute). As stated by Amnesty International, "The crime against humanity of apartheid under the Apartheid Convention, the Rome Statute and customary international law is committed when any inhuman or inhumane act (essentially a serious human rights violation) is perpetrated in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over another, with the intention to maintain that system."

5. The framework of apartheid allows a comprehensive understanding, grounded in international law, of a situation of segregation, oppression and domination by one racial group over another. Such systems in varied settings will never be identical; therefore, the system in Israel need not be identical or analogous to that in South Africa between 1948 and 1994 to be legally judged as a system. The record of policy of The Episcopal Church toward apartheid in South Africa in the 20th century is abundantly clear. Beginning with Resolution 1976-D036, "Support Efforts by Church, Government and Business to End Apartheid" through 2000 and five more resolutions, the Church's opposition to apartheid in South Africa was unequivocal, including recommending boycott and sanctions.

6. Ending apartheid is not only a legal imperative, but also a moral imperative. Churches that proclaim to be followers of Jesus are obligated to set aside political expediencies of the moment and act against injustice wherever it occurs. Thus has the [225th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#) voted in July 2022 to declare that the Israeli government's actions against Palestinian people meets the legal definition

of apartheid. Members of the United Church of Christ, the New England and Oregon-Idaho Conferences of the United Methodist Church, and Disciples of Christ have adopted similar statements or resolutions.

INDIVIDUAL OR DIOCESAN BODY RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF
THIS RESOLUTION: Secretary of Diocesan Convention