



DECLARATION FOR AN END TO GENOCIDE IN PALESTINE

Approved by Thirty-Fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ

July 15, 2025

(Excerpts)

“WHEREAS international bodies and agencies including the UN General Assembly,¹ The International Criminal Court,² Genocide Watch,³ Amnesty International⁴ and Human Rights Watch⁵ have each conducted investigations within the past 18 months and concluded that the actions of the State of Israel in Palestine constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide; and”

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all settings of the United Church of Christ be encouraged to receive this Resolution as a prophetic call and commit to:

1. Stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and to denounce the ongoing genocide whether that be through the context of public witness, legislative advocacy, legal action, or non-violent direct action.
2. Call on our government to cease providing financial sponsorship, military arms, and political cover to the State of Israel for acts of genocide.
3. Denounce hate and violence in all its forms including that rooted in Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab bias, and antisemitism, as contrary to the teachings of Jesus and the love of God for all humanity.
4. Share this declaration, pray, and speak within our congregations and communities about the genocide in Palestine.”

Passage of the 2025 Declaration for an End to Genocide

The UCC General Synod has been passing resolutions on Palestine and Israel since 1967. The July 2025 *Declaration for an end to Genocide in Palestine* builds on two recent resolutions passed in 2015 and 2021 and comes out of the recent experiences in 2025.

The 2015 resolution called on the UCC to join the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement initiated by Kairos Palestine and observed among other things that:

“Israel refuses to end, but rather has sought to solidify, its occupation of territory conquered in the 1967 War, leading to numerous illegal actions and human rights abuses by the Israeli government and military in defiance of United Nation resolutions,” (lines 300-305)

The 2021 resolution, *Declaration for a Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel*, stated among other things that:

“We declare that support for the oppression of the Palestinian people, whether passive or active, through silence, word or deed, is a sin.” (lines 169 – 171)

In October 2023, Hamas attacked Israeli military and civilian facilities adjacent to the fence encircling Gaza. Israeli soldiers and civilians were killed and hostages were taken back to Gaza. The UCC national office condemned this attack with Churches for Middle East Peace.

Israel’s military response was swift and massive. International scholars and human rights organizations have called the subsequent Israeli actions in Gaza a genocide. In the summer of 2024, the UCC national office issued a statement calling the Israeli actions in Gaza a genocide.

In January 2025, President Trump was sworn in and soon declared his support for the Israeli government’s plan to ‘finish the job’ and for Israel and United States to then redevelop Gaza. In May 2025, the UCC Southwest Conference annual meeting passed a resolution seeking to name this as genocide and calling for it to end. Their resolution was forwarded as an “Emergency Resolution” to the UCC General Synod for consideration at its meeting in July. After a determination that this resolution met the definition of an “Emergency Resolution,” it was referred to a committee as Resolution 11 of General Synod.

At the General Synod committee, the resolution was introduced by a “Proponent” and then the committee received a background briefing by subject matter experts. The committee debated and amended the resolution over several days and then voted to recommend their amended version to the full Synod plenary session for consideration. On July 15, 2025, the chair of the Resolution 11 Committee presented the resolution to the plenary session, which then debated it, considered amendments, and finally passed the resolution as it had been recommended by the committee.

This booklet contains the resolution as finally adopted and supporting materials and documents associated with its history. The FAQ document was written after Synod to answer common questions. There are similar booklets for the 2015 and 2021 resolutions that provide the background to those actions also. All of these are available on the UCC Movement for Palestinian Solidarity (UCCMPS) website: www.uccmps.org. The UCCMPS campaign to support these three General Synod resolutions, called “All Eyes on Palestine,” is also referenced at the same website.

October 2025

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DECLARATION FOR AN END TO GENOCIDE IN PALESTINE

A Resolution of Witness

TEXT OF THE MOTION

WHEREAS international bodies and agencies including the UN General Assembly,¹ The International Criminal Court,² Genocide Watch,³ Amnesty International⁴ and Human Rights Watch⁵ have each conducted investigations within the past 18 months and concluded that the actions of the State of Israel in Palestine constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide; and

WHEREAS more than 200 journalists and media workers have been killed in targeted attacks by the Israeli Defense Force making it the deadliest ever conflict for journalists⁶; and

WHEREAS medical providers in Gaza⁷ have reported that there is a pattern of children having been killed by single gunshot wounds to the head or torso indicating targeted killing, medical aid and supplies have been blocked from entering Gaza by the Israeli military, over 1,000 medical workers have been killed by Israeli forces,⁸ and hospitals have been targeted by the Israeli Defense Force⁹; and

WHEREAS as of March 22, 2025, *at least* 50,523 Palestinians in Gaza and 905 Palestinians in the West Bank have directly been killed by the Israeli Defense Forces since October 7, 2023, of which an estimated 15,781 were children¹⁰; and

WHEREAS between October 7, 2023, and September 30, 2024, an estimated 67,413+ Palestinians in Gaza were killed indirectly by starvation, lack of access to medical care, and water contamination¹¹; and

WHEREAS since March 2, 2025, the State of Israel, has blocked aid supplies including food, fuel, water, and medicine from entering Gaza, and the Israeli defense minister, Israel Katz, said, “Israel’s policy is clear: no humanitarian aid will enter Gaza”¹²; and

WHEREAS on March 18, 2025, the State of Israel resumed airstrikes on Gaza ending the ceasefire agreement¹³ a mere two months after the ceasefire was agreed to¹⁴; and

WHEREAS the U.S. federal government has used tax-funded dollars to give the State of Israel approximately \$34 billion in military weapons, arms, and other financial support between October 2023 and March 2025, at least 69% of Israel’s arms imports come from the US, and US made military vehicles and weapons have been identified as being used to conduct acts of genocide¹⁵; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Government has violated the federal Leahy Law which prohibits the U.S. Government, “from using funds for assistance to units of foreign security forces where there is

41 credible information implicating that unit in the commission of gross violations of human rights
42 (GVHR).”¹⁶; and

43
44 **WHEREAS** the U.S. government has disregarded the International Criminal Court’s arrest
45 warrants¹⁷ for Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and
46 instead welcomed Netanyahu as a guest to the White House¹⁸ and Congress¹⁹; and

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48 **WHEREAS** U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu have plans
49 underway to relocate Palestinians in Gaza to other countries, permanently displacing them, and
50 taking their homeland to use as a real estate project²⁰; and

51
52 **WHEREAS** the right to free speech as protected by the U.S. Constitution has been violated by
53 arrests, imprisonment, deportation, and violent attacks by law enforcement on Pro-Palestinian
54 activists²¹; and

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56 **WHEREAS** the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a Declaration
57 for Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel²² in 2021, following a tradition of decades of support
58 and advocacy for healing and restitution, and a condemnation of violence;

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60 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod of the United Church of
61 Christ adopts the following declaration:

- 62
- 63 1. We *affirm* that all are made in God’s image and are deserving of life free from
64 oppression, persecution, and violence.
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 - 66 2. We *denounce* all acts of the U.S. Government and the State of Israel that contribute to
67 a continuation of the genocide of the Palestinian people.
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 - 69 3. We *affirm* that the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people perpetrated by the State
70 of Israel and supported by the U.S. is a humanitarian crisis that calls for immediate
71 action.
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 - 73 4. We *reject* any theology or ideology including Christian Zionism, Supercessionism,
74 antisemitism, anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian, or anti-Islam bias that would privilege or
75 exclude any one nation, race, culture or religion within God’s universal economy of
76 grace²³.
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 - 78 5. We *affirm* the obligation of the U.S. to recognize international law, immediately cease
79 all sales and transfers of military arms and financial support to the State of Israel, and
80 use all legal and diplomatic tools to help bring about a permanent peace which
81 includes: protection of the rights of Palestinians to live in their homeland free from
82 violence, to uphold their human rights, to be released from military occupation, the
83 rights of refugees to return to their homes, and their right to self-determination.
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 - 85 6. We *affirm* the obligation of the State of Israel to immediately end the attacks on
86 Palestinians, end military occupation, and to expedite critical aid to enter Gaza, and
87 pay restitution to the Palestinian people.

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7. *We reject* the idea that any criticism of policies of the State of Israel is inherently antisemitic, and we oppose the efforts of U.S. federal and state governments to limit free speech.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all settings of the United Church of Christ be encouraged to receive this Resolution as a prophetic call and commit to:

1. Stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and to denounce the ongoing genocide whether that be through the context of public witness, legislative advocacy, legal action, or non-violent direct action.
2. Call on our government to cease providing financial sponsorship, military arms, and political cover to the State of Israel for acts of genocide.
3. Denounce hate and violence in all its forms including that rooted in Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab bias, and antisemitism, as contrary to the teachings of Jesus and the love of God for all humanity.
4. Share this declaration, pray, and speak within our congregations and communities about the genocide in Palestine.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages the National Setting, Conferences, Associations, and the Local Church to increase capacity and resources to support and advocate for an immediate end to the genocide of the Palestinian people.

FUNDING: The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

IMPLEMENTATION: The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

¹ “Genocide as colonial erasure - Report of Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967” <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/genocide-as-colonialerasure-report-francesca-albanese-01oct24/>. Accessed 22 April 2025.

² “Situation in the State of Palestine: ICC Pre-Trial Chamber I rejects the State of Israel's challenges to jurisdiction and issues warrants of arrest for Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant.” | *International Criminal Court*, 21 November 2024, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-state-palestine-icc-pre-trial-chamber-i-rejects-state-israels-challenges>. Accessed 22 April 2025.

³ Condon, Grace, and Frankie Condon. “Genocide is Never Justifiable: Israel and Hamas in Gaza.” *Genocide Watch*, 20 February 2024, <https://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/genocide-is-never-justifiable-israel-and-hamas-in-gaza>. Accessed 22 April 2025.

⁴ “Amnesty concludes Israel is committing genocide in Gaza.” *Amnesty International*, 5 December 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/amnesty-international-concludes-israel-is-committing-genocideagainst-palestinians-in-gaza/>. Accessed 22 April 2025.

⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/12/19/extermination-and-acts-genocide/israel-deliberately-depriving-palestiniansgaza>

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- ⁶ “Targeted, killed, burned alive: Journalists in Gaza attacked by Israel.” *Al Jazeera*, 7 April 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/4/7/targeted--burned-alivejournalists-in-gaza-attacked-by-israel>.
- ⁷ Sidhwa, Feroze, et al. “Opinion | What Doctors and Health Care Workers in Gaza Saw.” *The New York Times*, 9 October 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/09/opinion/gaza-doctor-interviews.html>, accessed 22 April 2025, and The Chris Hedges Youtube Channel. *Israel’s Eradication of Gaza’s Healthcare System (w/ Dr. Feroze Sidhwa)*. 23 April 2025. *youtube*, <https://youtu.be/Ip9lEnYa4q0?si=csooUpRy6WLeifJk>. video.
- ⁸ Doctors Without Borders. “Gaza crisis: MSF response to the Israel-Gaza war.” *Doctors Without Borders*, 24 April 2025, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/our-response-israel-gaza-war>. Accessed 24 April 2025, and Doctors Without Borders. “Remembering our colleagues killed in Gaza.” *Doctors Without Borders*, 21 March 2025, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/remembering-our-colleagues-killed-gaza>. Accessed 24 April 2025.
- ⁹ “Timeline: Israel’s attacks on hospitals throughout its war on Gaza.” *Al Jazeera*, 13 April 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/13/timeline-israels-attacks-on-hospitals-throughout-its-war-on-gaza>.
- ¹⁰ Kiyada, Sudev, et al. “The lives lost in Gaza: A closer look at those killed in the conflict so far.” *Reuters*, 1 March 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/graphics/ISRAEL-PALESTINIANS/FATALITIES/byvrxlqeqve/>. Accessed 22 April 2025; and Al-Mughrabi, Nidal, and Emma Farge. “Gaza death toll: how many Palestinians has Israel’s offensive killed?” *Reuters*, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/how-many-palestinians-has-israels-gaza-offensive-killed2025-01-15/>. Accessed 22 April 2025; and “Israel-Gaza war in maps and charts: Live tracker.” *Al Jazeera*, 9 October 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>. Accessed 22 April 2025. ^{xxi} Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs. “The Human Toll: Indirect Deaths from War in Gaza and the West Bank, October 7, 2023 Forward.” *Cost of War*, 7 October 2024
- ¹¹ https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2023/2024/Costs%20of%20War_Human%20Toll%20Since%20Oct%207.pdf.
- ¹² Ellis, Hannah. “No plans to allow any aid into Gaza, says Israeli minister.” *The Guardian*, 16 April 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/16/no-humanitarian-aid-gaza-israeli-minister-israel-katz-hamas>
- ¹³ The Guardian. “Israel strikes that shattered ceasefire ‘just the beginning’, Netanyahu says, after deadliest 24 hours in Gaza since 2023 – as it happened.” *The Guardian*, 18 March 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2025/mar/18/israel-gaza-live-blog-updates-air-strikes-strip-netanyuhamas>
- ¹⁴ Wikipedia. “2025 Gaza war ceasefire.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_Gaza_war_ceasefire. Accessed 24 April 2025
- ¹⁵ “US plans emergency Israel arms deals worth nearly \$3 billion.” *VOA*, 28 February 2025, <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-plans-emergency-israel-arms-deals-worth-nearly-3-billion/7993398.html>. Accessed 22 April 2025; and Reuters. “Rubio expedites delivery of \$4 billion in military aid to Israel.” *VOA news*, 2 march 2025, <https://www.voanews.com/a/rubio-expedites-delivery-of-4-billion-in-military-aid-to-israel/7994060.html>. Accessed 22 April 2025; and Watson Institute for International & Public Affairs, Brown University,. “United States Spending on Israel’s Military Operations and Related U.S. Operations in the Region, October 7, 2023-September 30, 2024 | Costs of War.” *Costs of War*, 7 October 2024, <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/2024/USspendingIsrael>. Accessed 22 April 2025; and The Times of Israel, and Tal Schneider. “Amid arms embargo calls, data shows 99% of Israeli weapon imports are from US, Germany.” *The Times of Israel*, 24 march 2024, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/amid-arms-embargocalls-data-shows-99-of-israeli-weapon-imports-are-from-us-germany/>; and Aydin, Yavuz. “Which US-made weaponry does Israel, which stands accused of genocide, use in Gaza?” *Anadolu Ajansi*, 6 June 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/which-us-made-weaponry-does-israel-whichstands-accused-of-genocide-use-in-gaza/3241486>.
- ¹⁶ “Leahy Law Fact Sheet - United States Department of State.” *State Department*, 20 January 2025, <https://www.state.gov/bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/releases/2025/01/leahy-law-fact-sheet>
- ¹⁷ Al Lawati, Abbas, et al. “International Criminal Court issues arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister.” *CNN*, 22 November 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/11/21/middleeast/international-criminal-court-issues-arrest-warrant-forisraeli-prime-minister-intl/index.html>
- ¹⁸ Wilson, Caitlin, and Emily Atkinson. “Netanyahu meets US lawmakers as Trump sanctions International Criminal Court - follow live.” *BBC*, 6 February 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/live/cvg4zwwwez9et>
- ¹⁹ Knickmeyer, Ellen, et al. “In fiery speech to Congress, Netanyahu vows ‘total victory’ in Gaza and denounces US protesters.” *AP*, 24 July 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/netanyahu-congress-gaza-hamas-israel-6ea5daf3cd1988b0ad6e874bd450f9bf>

²⁰ “AP report: U.S. and Israel look to Africa for permanent relocation of Palestinians from Gaza.” *PBS*, 14 March 2025, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/ap-report-u-s-and-israel-look-to-africa-for-permanent-relocation-of-palestinians-from-gaza>; and “Israel building agency to steer Palestinian 'voluntary departure' from Gaza.” *Al Jazeera*, 24 March 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/24/israel-building-agency-to-steer-palestinian-voluntary-departure-from-gaza>

²¹ “US detains Palestinian activist Mohsen Mahdawi at citizenship interview.” *Al Jazeera*, 15 April 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/15/palestinian-student-arrested-at-us-citizenship-interview-over-gazaprotests>; and “Judge allows Columbia graduate Mahmoud Khalil's deportation.” *BBC*, 11 April 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cwy0ngd11yzo>; and “Pro-Palestinian demonstrators who occupied Stanford building are charged with felonies.” *AP News*, 10 April 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/propalestinian-stanford-protesters-arrests-charges-88b82d95fd56dfd16f97c0a576f7cd86>; and “A look at the people ensnared in Trump's campaign against pro-Palestinian activism at US colleges.” *AP News*, 1 April 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/immigration-detainees-students-ozturk-khalil-78f544fb2c8b593c88a0c1f0e0ad9c5f>

²² Shalom United Church of Christ, New Haven, Connecticut. “DECLARATION FOR A JUST PEACE BETWEEN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL.” *General Synod*, 2021, <https://www.palestineportal.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/UCC-General-Synod-2021-Resolution-I-P.pdf>

²³ This is taken from Declaration For A Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel resolution passed at the 33rd General Synod in 2021.

Proponent's Speech: UCC Resolution on Genocide in Palestine

Committee 11

Siblings in Christ, esteemed members of this committee,

My name is Christopher Schouten, and I stand before you today as the proponent of a critical resolution passed in its current form by the Annual Meeting of the Southwest Conference: the "Declaration for an End to Genocide in Palestine." This resolution is not merely a piece of paper; it is, as the Rev. Munther Isaac, pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, so profoundly puts it, "the moral issue of our time."

For decades, the United Church of Christ has stood as a prophetic voice for justice and peace, particularly in Palestine and Israel. Our General Synods have consistently called for a just peace, grounding our policies in theology, international law, and human rights. However, since October 2023, the situation has escalated to an unprecedented degree. We have witnessed the installation of a radical right-wing government in Israel, accelerating the annexation of the West Bank through illegal settlements.

The violence unleashed upon Gaza is beyond comprehension. Upwards of **63,000 Gazans have been killed** by weapons supplied by the United States, with many more likely dead under the rubble, the majority civilians. The housing and public works infrastructure of Gaza has been systematically destroyed. Humanitarian aid, desperately needed, has been blocked or severely restricted, with Israel's defense minister, Israel Katz, stating, "Israel's policy is clear: no humanitarian aid will enter Gaza." A generation of Palestinian youth will suffer from physical and mental trauma for the rest of their lives, and millions have been displaced multiple times. In the West Bank, settler violence, unrestrained by the Israeli Defense Forces, has grown, and entire refugee camp populations have been forcibly displaced. We have also heard proposals, including from President Donald Trump, for Gaza that critics, including UN officials, have argued "would amount to ethnic cleansing or forced displacement of the Palestinian population."

This leads us to the unavoidable question: Is this genocide? The International Criminal Court defines genocide as "acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group." As early as January 2024, the International Court of Justice found Israel's actions in Gaza had reached the threshold of the "plausibility" of genocide, requiring preventive measures. In November 2024, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Prime Minister Netanyahu. Human Rights Watch, in May 2025, asserted that "The Israeli government's plan to demolish what remains of Gaza's civilian infrastructure and concentrate the Palestinian population into a tiny area would amount to an

abhorrent escalation of its ongoing crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and acts of genocide."

Our Palestinian Christian partners have consistently called upon the global religious community to speak the truth about the genocide taking place. Our own UCC officers, recognizing the urgency, stated, "As people of faith, we cannot be silent, waiting for the years to pass to verify that Israel is perpetrating genocide against Palestinians. We call for an end to this genocide." To hesitate now, to refuse to name what is happening, would be a grave failure of our commitment to solidarity, an implied rebuke of our own leadership, and would be interpreted by some as an endorsement of the current campaign of terror.

Some may raise concerns about accusations of anti-Semitism. Let me be clear: the United Church of Christ is vigilant against anti-Semitism in all its forms. However, criticism of Israel's policies in Gaza and the West Bank is not anti-Semitism. As Rabbi Brian Walt reminds us, "There are several powerful Jewish organizations and many Jews who may see your and my support for equal rights for Palestinians as an act of anti-Semitism. I urge you not to surrender to this malicious attempt to silence us that is based on a denial of the suffering of the Palestinian people." He further emphasizes our shared Abrahamic values, stating, "All three traditions place the sanctity of all human life at the center of our faiths. All people are created in the image of God and deserve compassion, justice, and love." Indeed, there is a large and growing number of Jews and Jewish groups, like Jewish Voice for Peace and Rabbis for Human Rights, who are themselves appalled by what is happening.

It is this call to justice that lies at the very heart of our shared heritage. As Rabbi Walt points out, "For all Jews, for all Christians, and for all Muslims, our roots lie in the story in Genesis when God chooses Abram as the father of the Jewish people. The text tells us that God is facing the evil committed by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. God says, 'Shall I hide from Abram what I'm about to do, for I have singled him out to keep the way of the divine by doing what is just and right?'" It is that profound directive – to do what is just and right, to protect those who suffer at the hands of the more powerful – that binds our faiths.

Finally, will this resolution make a difference? General Synod resolutions, by themselves, do not instantly create change. But they do encourage movements within and beyond the church that *do* make a difference. They are a faithful response to the moral imperatives of our day. As Rifat Odeh Kassir eloquently put it, "Adopting this resolution is not the end of a conversation; it is the beginning of a movement. It is a call to every congregation, every member, every pulpit to pray, to speak, and to act in this time." Jonathan Kuttub challenges us, asking, "Are we willing to deal with the consequences that genocide is taking place in our name? Our country is complicit in it. And we as a church and as a denomination are not living up to our responsibilities."

Perhaps most importantly, this resolution sends an undeniable message to our Palestinian neighbors and partners: "you are not alone, you are not abandoned, we care." This is a sacred call to advocacy, to courage, and to compassion. I urge this committee, and the General Synod, to act bravely and with integrity, to uphold the most basic belief of our faiths: that all people are created in the image of God and entitled to justice, freedom, and dignity. Let us vote to adopt this resolution. Thank you.

Chair's report to the Full Synod on Resolution 11

Declaration for an End to Genocide in Palestine

July 15, 2025

Good morning, Moderator.

My name is Rev. Emma Loane, a delegate from the Indiana-Kentucky Conference, and I served as Chair of Committee 11, which was assigned the Resolution of Witness entitled *Declaration for an End to Genocide in Palestine*, submitted by the Southwest Conference. Before I begin, I'd like to invite any delegates who served on Committee 11—those who engaged in this difficult and deep Spirit work—to gather around the baptismal font, if they feel so led, as a visible witness to the holy labour we carried together.

Committee 11 began our work bearing the weight of a topic of immense global urgency—marked by devastating human cost and long, painful histories behind every word. What met us in our committee space was the sacred responsibility to carry that weight with care, discernment, and humility. We began with an Educational Intensive led by Kristine Knutter and Ghassan Elkhatib, which offered historical grounding, multiple perspectives, and raised critical questions. Participants asked about international law, the history of Zionism, the experience of Palestinian Christians, and the role of U.S. foreign policy. There was a hunger for truth—and an undercurrent of grief, anger, and lament.

When Committee 11 entered into deliberation, we did so not just as delegates, but as people bearing witness. The voices in the room reflected a breadth of convictions and lived experiences: some grieved for Palestinian lives lost, some expressed fear for Jewish safety, some longed for peace, and others demanded justice. The dialogue was often emotional, sometimes raw, always earnest.

We turned to tools of spiritual discernment—silence, song, prayer, and careful listening. We acknowledged that faithful Christians can disagree but refused to let disagreement become division. At times, we struggled to find common language. At times, the temperature rose. Yet we kept returning to the question: *What is the Spirit calling the Church to say now?*

The original resolution was a bold and urgent call to name the violence against the Palestinian people for what it is—genocide—and to respond accordingly. It cited international human rights bodies, detailed the actions of both the Israeli government and the United States, and called the United Church of Christ to solidarity, advocacy, and prophetic witness in every setting.

After deep discernment, the Committee voted overwhelmingly to affirm the substance and urgency of the resolution, recommending its adoption with amendments. Key changes included:

- **Clarifying theological commitments:** We affirmed that all people are made in the image of God, and rejected any implication that violence by any actor can be justified by faith.
- **Nuancing complex realities:** We revised language for accuracy, to avoid misinterpretation, and to ground the resolution in previous UCC witness—particularly the 2021 *Declaration for a Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel*. We are especially grateful to Peter Makari, (Minister and Team Leader for Global Ministries Middle East and Europe) from whom the committee occasionally asked for resource information, for reminding us that past Resolutions “remain alive” and form part of our living testimony.
- **Addressing calls for balance:** Some delegates sought condemnation of all violence, including that committed by Hamas. While the Committee affirmed that the resolution's focus is the

unprecedented scale of destruction in Gaza, we also reiterated the UCC’s consistent record of commitment to nonviolence and human rights.

This was hard and holy work. Delegates held tension without retreating into easy binaries. We grieved together. We prayed. And—slowly, courageously—we found consensus.

On behalf of Committee 11, I move that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopts the resolution *Declaration for an End to Genocide in Palestine* and recommend its approval as amended.

Moderator:

“This comes from a Committee and does not require a second. Would you like to speak to the motion?”

Chair:

“Yes, thank you Moderator”

The Gospel calls us to name injustice, to walk alongside the oppressed, and to act when human dignity is denied. That is what this resolution seeks to do. *Declaration for an End to Genocide in Palestine* is not an abstract policy statement. It is a moral and spiritual response to a catastrophic reality—one unfolding before our eyes, and affirmed by international human rights bodies, ecumenical partners, and our Palestinian Christian siblings. Since October 2023, tens of thousands have been killed, many of them children. Millions face displacement, starvation, and generational trauma. This is not simply a conflict—it is a devastation, and this resolution names this violence for what it is: genocide. And it calls the Church to respond—with clarity, courage, and care.

In Committee 11, we wrestled with this sacred responsibility. Through deep discernment, we amended the resolution to reflect theological grounding, to affirm the image of God in all people, to reject all hate—including antisemitism—and to acknowledge the real pain and fear that persist in Jewish communities worldwide. These truths are not in opposition; they are woven together by our faith. We also grounded the resolution in prior UCC witness and responded to calls for nuance without retreating from moral clarity. This was hard and holy work. Passing this resolution says: we will not look away. We will not be silent. We will speak the truth in love. We will follow Jesus, who blesses the peacemakers and draws near to the suffering.

On behalf of Committee 11, I urge this body to adopt the resolution and to do so as an act of deep faithfulness. Thank you.

- Rev. Emma Loane

[General Synod passes declaration for an end to genocide in Palestine](#)

by [Kayla Berkey](#) | published on Jul 15, 2025

Following heartfelt discussion and careful consideration, General Synod took a clear stand in naming the ongoing genocide of Palestinians “a humanitarian crisis that calls for immediate action.”

As the “[Declaration for an End to Genocide in Palestine](#)” was brought to the delegate body, the Rev. Emma Loane, chair of the resolution’s committee #11 and delegate from the [Indiana-Kentucky Conference](#), named an awareness of “bearing the weight of a topic of immense global urgency marked by devastating human cost and long, painful histories behind every word.”

She took special care to invite its committee members to gather around the baptismal font near the Synod stage as the resolution was introduced “as a physical witness to the holy labor we carried out together,” she said.

The resolution was approved by 594 delegates, with 32 denying and 14 abstaining.

During over an hour of discussion on the Synod floor, all delegates who spoke offered support for the resolution or proposed and debated whether additional amendments should be added.

Mayadah Tarazi, a representative of longtime Global Ministries’ partner [YWCA Palestine](#), shared that she is originally from Gaza where most of her family members still live and are sheltering in the church. She offered gratitude for the resolution, along with a heavy heart.

“This resolution is not an end, but a beginning, a faithful act of truth-telling in a time when truth is being silenced. The genocide is still happening. Every day, around 70 lives are lost in Gaza,” she said. “This resolution gives us hope that the church will move from words to faithful action through advocacy, divestment, education, and deep solidarity.”

Others also named the immense grief and urgency underlying the words of the resolution.

“When I see the tears of the people of Gaza, I see the tears of Black Americans. When I see the tears of the people of Gaza, I see the tears of Native Americans. And in these tears, I see the tears of God. The world has abandoned the people of Gaza like in 1994 when the world abandoned the people of Rwanda,” said Jerry Locula, a delegate from the [Minnesota Conference](#). “On a daily basis, the genocide in Gaza has been

implemented by American taxes. Do we feel guilty of this? Every aspect of international law has been frustrated in Gaza, and we are called here to be the church.”

Amendments considered

Two amendments were put forward on the Synod floor, and while delegates debated and voted on them, neither ultimately passed.

One proposed amendment sought to add additional words to affirm the UCC’s unwavering opposition to antisemitism. Some delegates expressed that adding this could help to strengthen care and relationships with Jewish communities. Other delegates drew attention to multiple parts of the resolution that already state opposition to antisemitism.

Peter Makari, Global Ministries executive for Middle East & Europe, was called upon to speak to the UCC’s history of speaking and acting against antisemitism.

“The UCC has spoken extensively over the years, including as far back as 1983 about the question of antisemitism, clearly denouncing it, clearly expressing affirmation of our relationship with the Jewish community, and participates consistently in dialogue with our Jewish friends,” he said.

Another proposed amendment, brought by Joe Moat of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, sought to insert words into the resolution that explicitly denounce Hamas. Moat said he believed that “adding mention of Hamas, its partners, and other entities in this resolution is crucial in speaking to the tragedy and complexity of this issue.”

After much engaged debate, this amendment was denied by delegate vote.

Fred Rogers, delegate from the Minnesota Conference, was one of many who spoke against the change.

“Acts of terrorism are not justifiable, and the UCC has already denounced the actions of October 7 and reasserted its deep opposition to antisemitism,” he said. “This resolution addresses the current genocide. The urgency of this concern increased in 2025 because of our president’s support and encouragement for the cleansing of Gaza. Attempting to balance concern about the 2025 genocide with a reference to the 2023 attack by Hamas shifts the focus and dilutes our collective responsibility for the present.”

‘Speak the truth in love’

Following the extensive discussion, the resolution passed with broad support in the form that was presented to the delegate body by the resolution’s committee.

Amendments that had been made by the committee sought to clarify theological commitments that all people are made in the image of God and reject that any violence can be justified by faith. They also sought to solidify the connection to previous resolutions, particularly the 2021 [Declaration for Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel](#).

“Passing this resolution says we will not look away. We will not be silent. We will speak the truth in love. We will follow Jesus who blesses the peacemakers and draws near to the suffering,” Loane said.

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NOTES

WHY IT MATTERS, WHAT IT MEANS



Considering Your Vote at General Synod on “A Declaration for An End to Genocide in Palestine”

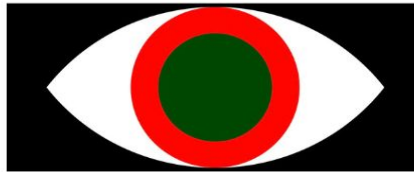
“God calls the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship...and resist the powers of evil.” UCC Statement of Faith

The Thirty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ will be called upon to act on a resolution dealing with what the Rev. Munther Isaac, pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, calls the “moral issue of our time.” Recently the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches stated that:

The military campaign in Gaza has entailed grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention which may constitute genocide. . . . Simultaneously, the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem continue to experience intensified violence, illegal settlement expansion, and systemic human rights violations. These actions defy international legal norms, including the United Nations Charter, the Geneva Conventions, international human rights treaties, and numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

Building on decades of General Synod statements and resolutions, statements from the ecumenical community, and considering the unprecedented escalation since October, 2023, in Israel’s violence unleashed against the Palestinian people, bold witness from the General Synod is called for.

- **Is another resolution needed now?** The General Synod has a long record of actions calling for peace with justice in Palestine and Israel. As recently as 2021 the Synod adopted a comprehensive statement grounding our policy in just peace theology and practice, international law, human rights norms, and the call of our Palestinian Christian and Israeli human rights partners. Since 2023, however, the situation in Palestine has grown even more dire. A radical right-wing government has been installed in Israel. Annexation of the West Bank by Israeli settlements has accelerated. Since the Hamas attacks in October, 2023, unprecedented violence has been unleashed on Gaza. Upwards of 63,000 Gazans have been killed by weapons supplied by the United States, with many more likely dead under the rubble, the majority civilians. The housing and public works infrastructure of Gaza has been destroyed. Humanitarian aid has been blocked or severely restricted. A generation of Palestinian youth will suffer from physical and mental trauma for the rest of their lives. Millions have been displaced multiple times. In the West Bank, settler violence, unrestrained by the Israeli Defense Forces, has grown and entire refugee camp populations have been forcibly displaced. President Trump has made proposals for Gaza that critics, including UN officials, have argued would amount to ethnic cleansing or forced displacement of the Palestinian population.
- **Is this Genocide?** The International Criminal Court defines genocide as “acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group.”



As early as January 2024, the International Court of Justice have found Israel's actions in Gaza had reached the threshold of the "plausibility" of genocide, and required preventive measures to be taken by Israel. Then in November 2024, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Prime Minister Netanyahu, and initiated further investigations. Human Rights Watch, in May, 2025 asserted that "The Israeli government's plan to demolish what remains of Gaza's civilian infrastructure and concentrate the Palestinian population into a tiny area would amount to an abhorrent escalation of its ongoing crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and acts of genocide."

- **Must we use the word Genocide?** Our Palestinian Christian partners have consistently called upon the global religious community to speak the truth about the genocide taking place in Gaza and spilling into the West Bank. And a year ago our United Church of Christ officers said,

Over the last nine months, we have witnessed the atrocities as they have occurred in Palestine, horrors that could have and can be stopped if global leaders and public pressure demand it. As people of faith, we cannot be silent, waiting for the years to pass to verify that Israel is perpetrating genocide against Palestinians. We call for an end to this genocide.

Failure to name what is happening in Gaza as genocide would be a grave failure of The UCC's commitment to be in solidarity with our mission partners, an implied rebuke of our UCC officers, and would be interpreted by leaders in Israel and among pro-Israel organizations in the US as an endorsement of the current campaign of terror.

- **Is this anti-Semitic?** The charge of anti-Semitism has been used by Israel, mainline Jewish organizations in the US, groups like AIPAC, US politicians, conservative Christians, and now aggressively by the Trump administration to silence critics of Israel. We must be vigilant that our language, actions, and beliefs do not represent, condone, or encourage anti-Semitism. But criticism of Israel's policies in Gaza and the West Bank is not anti-Semitism. And there are a growing number of Jews and Jewish groups like Jewish Voice for Peace, Rabbis for Human Rights, and others who are appalled by what is happening in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza.

Will this make a difference? General Synod resolutions, by themselves, don't create change. But they do encourage movements within and beyond the church that make a difference. They are a faithful response to the moral imperatives of our day. Perhaps most important, they say to our Palestinian neighbors and partners, "you are not alone, you are not abandoned, we care."

UCC Movement for Palestinian Solidarity (UCC MPS)

formerly UCC Palestine Israel Network



Voices for Justice:

Global Religious & Human Rights Leaders Support the UCC Palestinian Genocide Resolution

In this document, Rifat Odeh Kassis, Jonathan Kuttub, and Rabbi Brian Walt—distinguished individuals serving as politicians, global rights activists, religious leaders, and international lawyers—express their profound support for the United Church of Christ (UCC) resolution concerning Palestine. Their testimonies collectively urge the UCC to adopt this resolution, emphasizing its moral, legal, and theological imperative. Watch their video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9ZLSSbrjPg>



Rifat Odeh Kassis

Rifat Odeh Kassis is a prominent Palestinian Christian human rights advocate and civil society leader. He is the General Director of Defense for Children International – Palestine (DCI-P), an independent, local Palestinian human rights organization dedicated to promoting and protecting the rights of Palestinian children in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Kassis is also a co-founder of the Kairos Palestine document, a Christian Palestinian call for justice and peace, and a member of its steering committee. He has been actively involved in advocacy efforts at various international forums, including the United Nations and the World Council of Churches, raising awareness about the human rights situation in Palestine.

Call to Action for the UCC:

Dear siblings in Christ, in this critical moment, I come to you not as a politician, but as a person of faith. One who believes deeply in the moral courage of the United Church of Christ. Today, I urge you to adopt the resolution that names what's happening in Gaza for what it truly is: genocide, and to acknowledge the role of US complicity in enabling it.

Legal Grounding of the Claim:

This is not a reckless accusation; it is a call grounded in international law, lived reality, and our sacred values. In January 2024, the International Court of Justice found it plausible that Israel is committing acts of genocide in Gaza. The court ordered Israel to prevent genocidal acts and ensure humanitarian aid flows to civilians. Just weeks later, the International Criminal

Court issued arrest warrants for Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the use of starvation as a weapon of war. And in March this year, Nicaragua brought a case against Germany for aiding and abetting genocide, establishing that nations providing weapons and diplomatic cover may share legal responsibility.

US Complicity:

Friends, the US is not a bystander; it is an active participant. It is a funder, it is a supplier, it is a shield at the United Nations and other international forums.

Theological and Moral Imperative:

As people of faith, we are called to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. The United Church of Christ has a proud tradition of prophetic witness, from denouncing South African apartheid to defending indigenous rights. Naming genocide is not about taking sides; it is about siding with the truth and with life, with the God of justice. To stay silent now is to betray our commitment to the oppressed and to ignore the cry of innocent.

Embracing Discomfort for Faithfulness:

I know this resolution may feel uncomfortable to some, but comfort has never been our goal; faithfulness is. Adopting this resolution is not the end of a conversation; it is the beginning of a movement. It is a call to every congregation, every member, every pulpit to pray, to speak, and to act in this time. Let us be a church that does not flinch, a church that names evil when we see it, even when it costs us a lot, because nothing short of our lives and our moral integrity is at stake. Let us receive this resolution as a sacred call to advocacy, to courage, to compassion. Let us together issue the path of justice for Gaza, for the children, and for our collective soul. And thank you.

Jonathan Kuttab

Jonathan Kuttab is a distinguished Palestinian human rights lawyer and activist. He is a co-founder of Al-Haq, a leading Palestinian human rights organization, and the Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence. He also co-founded the Mandela Institute for Human Rights. Kuttab is a member of the New York Bar and the Palestinian Bar. He has lectured and written extensively on human rights, international law, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He currently serves as the Executive Director of Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA), an ecumenical Christian organization dedicated to advocating for justice and peace in the Holy Land.

Genocide as a Legal and Moral Term:

My name is Jonathan Kuttab. I am the executive director of FOSNA (Friends of Sabeel North

America). I'm also an international lawyer and human rights activist. Genocide is a clearly defined legal term under international law. There is no question that what is happening in Gaza today constitutes a genocide. Genocide scholars, including Israeli genocide scholars, have all agreed that this forms a genocide. In fact, we can't find any genocide scholar who rejects this designation.

Consequences of Naming Genocide:

The problem is that people do not want to call it genocide, not because they are not convinced that it fits the definition, but because they don't want to deal with the consequences of the fact that a genocide is being committed today in broad daylight, with the knowledge of the whole world, and they are not doing anything about it. It is the moral consequences of designating genocide that people are worried about, reluctant to deal with.

Moral Responsibility of the Church:

So, for a Christian denomination to refuse or to hesitate or to quibble about whether we can call it a genocide is not a legal question; it's a moral question. Are we willing to deal with the consequences that genocide is taking place in our name? Our country is complicit in it. And we as a church and as a denomination are not living up to our responsibilities.

Lessons from History:

The church today still is feeling the guilt and the shame of having done nothing or not enough during the Holocaust of the Jews in Germany. The Holocaust took place in the dark. This genocide is taking place in the light of day, and it's up to us to do something about it. Thank you.

Rabbi Brian Walt

Rabbi Brian Walt is a progressive rabbi and a prominent voice in Jewish peace activism. He was born and raised in South Africa and was active in the anti-apartheid movement, which deeply influenced his commitment to social justice. He served as a congregational rabbi for many years in the United States. Rabbi Walt is a co-founder of Rabbis for Human Rights – North America (now T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights) and has been actively involved with organizations like Jewish Voice for Peace. He is known for his outspoken advocacy for Palestinian rights and for challenging Israeli policies that he views as unjust, often drawing on Jewish ethical traditions. He is a member of Rabbis for Ceasefire and the rabbinic cabinet of Jewish Voice for Peace.

Support for the Resolution:

I am Rabbi Brian Walt, and I am delighted and honored to add my voice as a rabbi in support of the UCC resolution for an end to genocide in Palestine.

Addressing Accusations of Anti-Semitism:

There are several powerful Jewish organizations and many Jews who may see your and my support for equal rights for Palestinians as an act of anti-Semitism. I urge you not to surrender to this malicious attempt to silence us that is based on a denial of the suffering of the Palestinian people. This includes the Nakba, on which the state of Israel was created, the more than 50-year brutal occupation of the West Bank and repeated assaults “mowing the lawn” in Gaza, the apartheid in Israel that privileges Jewish lives over the lives of non-Jews, and now in the shocking reality of a genocide that Israel, the Jewish state, is engaging in with the US fully complicit.

Shared Abrahamic Values:

For all Jews, for all Christians, and for all Muslims, our roots lie in the story in Genesis when God chooses Abram as the father of the Jewish people. The text tells us that God is facing the evil committed by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. God says, "Shall I hide from Abram what I'm about to do, for I have singled him out to keep the way of the divine by doing what is just and right?" It is that call to do what is just and right, to protect those who suffer at the hands of the more powerful, that is at the heart of Judaism, and I would argue also at the heart of Christianity and at the heart of Islam. All three traditions place the sanctity of all human life at the center of our faiths. All people are created in the image of God and deserve compassion, justice, and love.

Jewish Community's Moral Divide:

There is a very large and growing number of Jews, including many rabbis and also many younger and older Jews, who have been utterly shocked by the cruelty of the Israeli actions in Gaza. The Jewish people as a people are wrestling with an important moral divide in our community. As one rabbi of the over 300 rabbis in Rabbis for Ceasefire and one of the rabbis on the rabbinic cabinet of the Jewish Voice for Peace, I urge you all to vote for this resolution. This resolution upholds the most basic belief of our faiths: that all people are created in the image of God and entitled to justice, freedom, and dignity. Let us act bravely and with integrity to make this a reality.

Summary of Key Points Supporting the UCC Resolution:

- **Genocide Designation:** The speakers unequivocally assert that the situation in Gaza constitutes genocide, a legally defined term supported by international court findings (e.g., ICJ finding it plausible) and consensus among genocide scholars.
- **US Complicity:** The United States is identified as an active participant, funder, supplier, and diplomatic shield for actions in Gaza, making it complicit in the alleged genocide.
- **Moral and Faith Imperative:** The speakers emphasize that their respective faith traditions (Christianity and Judaism) compel them to uphold justice, protect the

oppressed, and speak truth to power, drawing parallels to historical moral failures like the Holocaust.

- **Sanctity of All Human Life:** A core tenet across the Abrahamic faiths is the sanctity of all human life, emphasizing that all people are created in the image of God and deserve compassion, justice, freedom, and dignity.
- **Addressing Accusations of Anti-Semitism:** The speakers urge against being silenced by malicious accusations of anti-Semitism when advocating for Palestinian rights, highlighting that a growing number of Jews and rabbis also support these rights and acknowledge Palestinian suffering (e.g., Nakba, occupation, apartheid).
- **Call to Action:** The resolution is presented not as an end, but as the beginning of a movement, calling on religious communities to actively pray, speak, and act for justice in Gaza, even when it requires courage and comes at a cost to comfort.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Church of Christ General Synod Adopts "Declaration for an End to Genocide in Palestine," Urging U.S. Action and Reaffirming Stance Against Anti-Semitism

KANSAS CITY, MO – July 16, 2025 – The United Church of Christ Movement for Palestinian Solidarity (UCC MPS) is pleased to announce that the United Church of Christ (UCC) 35th General Synod, meeting in Kansas City, overwhelmingly adopted the ["Declaration for an End to Genocide in Palestine"](#) on July 15, 2025. This landmark resolution, passed with over 90% approval (594 delegates in favor, 32 against, 14 abstaining), marks a pivotal moment in the denomination's ongoing commitment to justice and peace in the Holy Land.

The resolution directly addresses the catastrophic reality unfolding in Palestine, as affirmed by international human rights bodies, ecumenical partners, and Palestinian Christian communities. "The Gospel calls us to name injustice, to walk alongside the oppressed and to act when human dignity is denied," stated the Rev. Emma Loeme, a delegate from the Indiana-Kentucky Conference who introduced the resolution from committee. "This is not simply a conflict, it is a devastation and this resolution names this violence for what it is: genocide."

The resolution, originally authored by Rev. Sabrina Jennings and submitted by the Southwest Conference, cites findings from the International Court of Justice, Genocide Watch, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch. The urgency of the resolution was further amplified by Professor Omar Bartov's guest essay, "I'm a Genocide Scholar. I Know It When I See It," published in the New York Times on July 15, 2025, the morning the resolution was considered.

A key aspect of the resolution is its recognition of the United States government's complicity in enabling these actions, noting that approximately \$34 billion in arms were provided to Israel between October 2023 and March 2025, with at least 69% of Israel's arms imports coming from the U.S.. The resolution also notes that these arms shipments violate the federal Leahy Law, which prohibits U.S. government funds from being used for assistance to foreign security forces credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights.

During deliberations, delegates affirmed the resolution's theological commitments, emphasizing that all people are made in the image of God and rejecting any justification of violence by faith. The resolution builds upon decades of UCC statements and resolutions, including the 2021 [Declaration for a Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel](#), and reinforces the denomination's consistent stance for human rights and international law, while reaffirming its longstanding condemnation of anti-Semitism.

Emotional testimony from delegates underscored the profound impact of the situation. Jerry Locula from Minnesota shared, “When I see the tears of the people of Gaza, I see the tears of Black Americans. When I see the tears of the people of Gaza, I see the tears of Native Americans. And in these tears, I see the tears of God”. He continued, "The world has abandoned the people of Gaza like in 1994 when the world abandoned the people of Rwanda... Every aspect of international humanitarian law has been frustrated in Gaza, and we are called to be the church.”

Mayadah Tarazi from the YWCA Palestine expressed deep gratitude for the resolution's passage, noting, "The genocide is ongoing, resulting in approximately 70 lives lost daily in Gaza". She conveyed hope that the church would now move "from words to action through advocacy, divestment, education, and solidarity."

The Declaration outlines clear calls to action for all settings of the United Church of Christ:

- **Solidarity:** Stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and denounce the ongoing genocide through public witness, legislative advocacy, legal action, or non-violent direct action.
- **Government Accountability:** Call on the U.S. government to cease providing financial sponsorship, military arms, and political cover to the State of Israel for acts of genocide.
- **Combatting Hate:** Denounce hate and violence in all its forms, including Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab bias, and anti-Semitism, as contrary to the teachings of Jesus and the love of God for all humanity.
- **Education and Prayer:** Share this declaration, pray, and speak within congregations and communities about the genocide in Palestine.

The full text of the resolution can be found [here](#).

About the United Church of Christ Movement for Palestinian Solidarity (UCC MPS): The United Church of Christ Movement for Palestinian Solidarity (UCC MPS) is comprised of dedicated UCC members and clergy committed to advocating for justice and peace in Palestine. UCC MPS operates independently and is not an official affiliate or entity of the United Church of Christ denomination. We seek to support and encourage the actions of UCC congregations and members to discern their vision for peace and justice and act accordingly to end the suffering of so many. For more information, please visit www.uccmps.org.

Contact: Rev. Dr. Linda Noonan, Co-Chair, UCC MPS, chair@uccmps.org, 610-529-1376

FAQs re:

**DECLARATION FOR AN END TO GENOCIDE IN PALESTINE
A Resolution of Witness**

35th General Synod of the United Church of Christ, 2025

Why is this Declaration, and its implementation, important now? Our General Synod has affirmed its support for self-determination for Palestinians several times, including calling out “apartheid” in 2021 with the *Declaration for a Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel*. Why are we calling on our churches yet another time? What’s different?

What is different is the level of acute violence being visited on the Palestinian people since Israel began its military response to the attack by Hamas on October 7, 2023, now named as genocide by multiple human rights organizations and our General Synod. Israeli military are disproportionately targeting civilians, displacing whole towns and cities, destroying hospitals and humanitarian infrastructure, and blocking humanitarian aid, both medical and food aid. Seventy-five percent of Gaza’s population has been displaced. Most hospitals and medical facilities in the strip have been destroyed, with staff displaced and killed. International humanitarian organizations warn that starvation is rising to a crisis level. International journalists are banned by the Israeli military from entering Gaza, while Palestinian journalists are being targeted and killed while covering the war. Israel has stated that its policy is to retain full control of Gaza, even it means removing or annihilating its Palestinian population.

But didn’t Hamas start this, by invading a community inside Israel on October 7, killing and injuring residents and kidnapping hostages? Why does the Declaration condemn only the violent acts by Israel and not those by Palestinians? Why aren’t Israeli losses also named and grieved?

The Declaration affirms “that all are made in God’s image and are deserving of life free from oppression, persecution and violence.” All suffering and loss of life due to war deserves to be respected and grieved. But it is crucial to understand that this violence did not begin on October 7, nor was it initiated solely by Hamas. Palestinians, and all aspects of Palestinian life, have been under Israeli control and oppression since the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. International law affirms the right of occupied peoples to resist occupation and repression.

More than two-thirds of Gaza’s population is made up of refugees (some second- and third-generation refugees) from previous displacements by the State of Israel. In contemporary Gaza, before Hamas was democratically voted into power as the local government, and long before the October 7 attack, Israel has blockaded Gaza completely, controlling all travel in and out (including for work and education), as well as the importation of virtually all necessities for human life – food, construction materials, medicines and medical supplies, etc., even controlling access to potable water. Palestinians have resisted displacement from their homes and lands, restrictions on their rights, and every other aspect of Israeli control and occupation in many ways over decades – most often non-violently but sometimes with arms and violence, as on October 7.

Palestine has suffered at the hands of Israel for many decades; but the world is full of suffering visited on some people or nations by others. As Christians, we pray for relief of all suffering and oppression. Why lift up Palestine and Gaza right now?

The U.S. actually has been an active supporter of Israel, including of its military, since the founding of the State of Israel. The violence in Gaza is of great import to Americans, as our government directly underwrites it with military aid to Israel, both through direct funds and through the provision of weapons and materiel. “The United States has provided at least \$21.7 billion in military aid to Israel since the start of the war in Gaza on October 7, 2023. However, under both the Biden and Trump administrations, an additional tens of billions of dollars in arms sales agreements have been committed for weapons and services that will be paid for in the years to come.” (William D. Hartung, Senior Research Fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft in a report released jointly by the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft and the Costs of War project housed at Brown University’s Watson School of International and Public Affairs. The complete, report may be found at: [U.S. Military Aid and Arms Transfers to Israel, October 2023](#))

As American voters, taxpayers and Christian believers, we hold responsibility for how those monies are used. The Declaration asks our church, at all levels, to call on the U.S. to abide by its own laws requiring that military aid, paid for with our taxes, not be used in the commission of “gross violations of human rights.”

What is the UCC’s history with Palestine and Palestinians? What are our relationships with Palestinian Christians and their churches and institutions?

The UCC has more than 200 years of engagement in the Middle East through its historical mission agencies, starting in the early 19th century, long before the State of Israel was created. The United Church of Christ has been directly involved in ecumenical support for Palestinian rights, especially Palestinian refugees, dating back to the mid-1960s. The first resolution of the UCC’s General Synod was adopted within weeks of the 1967 war, supporting a “permanent peace in the Middle East” and the “just treatment for the Arab refugees and relief of their suffering.” Since its establishment 25 years ago, Global Ministries, the common mission agency of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), has been responsible for nurturing global mission partnerships for the UCC. Those partners include a wide range of churches and organizations in Palestine/Israel and the Middle East, among them church denominations, ecumenical councils and agencies, human rights advocacy organizations, and others. [A description of these can be found here](#). The UCC, with the Disciples, has also appointed mission personnel to serve with these partners over the years.

How does the Declaration comport with the biblical history of the Jewish people and their relationship to the land that is now Israel?

The Bible records and interprets human experiences with the divine, and how those experiences shaped an understanding of who God is and what God expects of, and desires for, God’s people. It is not a scientific document or an impartial record of history. Many theologians understand God’s covenant with the ancient people of Israel as one of righteousness: the people committed themselves to obey God’s moral and ethical commandments, and God promised to be with them and care for them as they sought to live out that commitment. Some Old Testament texts specifically refer to God’s gift of a land to God’s people; others do not; still others call into question the

concept of God’s people as a nation with a land. The contemporary concept of nation-state as we know it today was absent from the worldview of Biblical times. Modern believers looking at the behavior of any state through the lens of their faith may be moved to call states to account for behavior that is perceived as unethical and sinful. Among many other sources and scholars, our distinguished UCC Old Testament theologian, the late Walter Brueggemann, offers a succinct, readable treatment of this issue in his book [Chosen? Reading the Bible Amid the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict](#). Brueggeman lifts up an understanding of “chosen people” as those called to be a light and a blessing to the human family, rather than “chosen” to dominate or control others.

Doesn’t this Declaration take a political position, and is that appropriate for a church body?

The United Church of Christ (along with many other denominations and religious bodies) has a long history of addressing national and international affairs as a part of its witness for justice for all peoples, and has called out many violations of human rights both in the U.S. and abroad. The Declaration recognizes that the violation of human rights and international law represent violent oppression of the Palestinian people in their own land.

Jesus taught and practiced liberation for the oppressed as an essential element of faith. Consequently, a witness for just treatment for oppressed people is a Gospel mandate. The Declaration acknowledges that implementing such a faith commitment may compel difficult choices in the political and social realm, and recognizes that changes in the interest of justice for Palestinians will have political implications for the State of Israel and its people, as well as for U.S. policy. In 2021 the General Synod passed a resolution declaring that “*support for the oppression of the Palestinian people, whether passive or active, through silence, word or deed, is a sin.*” Thus we are called to act.

Is this Declaration anti-Semitic?

It is noteworthy that the American organization, [Jewish Voice for Peace](#), along with other Jewish activists and organizations, have been among the loudest and best-organized voices critiquing the U.S. policy of support for the Israeli military and against Israel’s prosecution of the Gaza war. JVP has repeatedly stated: “Criticism of Jews for being Jews is anti-Semitic; criticism of the state of Israel is not.” Given that Christianity bears a long history of anti-Semitic belief and behavior toward Jews, it is important to be very clear about the distinction.

The 2025 Declaration rejects “any theology or ideology including Christian Zionism, Supercessionism, anti-Semitism, anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian, or anti-Islam bias that would privilege or exclude any one nation race, culture or religion within God’s universal economy of grace.” Previous Declarations have included similar language. The UCC position on this is clear.

NOTES

Links to Other Resources and Recordings

[Synod Debate and Passage of the Declaration for an End to Genocide in Palestine on July 15, 2025](#)



[35th General Synod Website with all session videos and all resolutions in both initial and final form](#)



[“I’m a Genocide Scholar: I know it when I see it”, by Omar Bartov in the New York Times – July 15, 2025](#)



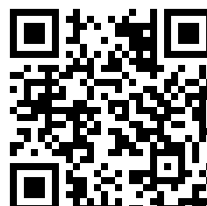
[UCC Statement on Oct 7, 2023](#)



[UCC statement on Genocide – July 2024](#)



[UCC Movement for Palestinian Solidarity](#)



UCC General Resolutions on Israel/Palestine

- [1967 General Synod Resolution: On the Middle East Situation](#)
- [1969 General Synod Resolution: On the Middle East situation](#)
- [1971 General Synod Resolution: The Middle East](#)
- [1973 Executive Council Resolution: Middle East Situation](#)
- [1979 General Synod Action: Communication to Presidents Sadat, Begin, and Carter](#)
- [1979 General Synod Resolution: Overture on Consultation on the Future of the City of Jerusalem](#)
- [1987 General Synod Resolution: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#)
- [1989 General Synod Resolution: On the Middle East](#)
- [1991 General Synod Resolution: Consequences of the Persian Gulf War for a Just Peace Church](#)
- [1991 General Synod Resolution: Support for the Men and Women of our Armed Forces](#)
- [1993 General Synod Resolution: Urging Reopening of East Jerusalem](#)
- [1997 General Synod Resolution: Jerusalem City of Life](#)
- [1997 General Synod Resolution: Palestine/Israel](#)
- [1999 General Synod Resolution: Bringing Justice and Peace to The Middle East](#)
- [2003 General Synod Resolution: An Alternative Voice to Christian Zionism](#)
- [2005 General Synod Resolution: Concerning Use of Economic Leverage in Promoting Peace in the Middle East](#)
- [2005 General Synod Resolution: Tear Down the Wall](#)
- [2007 Executive Council action on referred resolution “In Support of a Renewed and Balanced Study and Response to the Conflict Between Palestine and Israel”](#)
- [2013 Executive Council action on reports of implementation of 2005 “Economic Leverage” resolution](#)
- [2015 General Synod Resolution: A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#)
- [2017 General Synod Resolution: A Call for the United Church of Christ to Advocate for the Rights of Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation](#)
- [2019 General Synod Resolution: Addressing the State of Global Forced Migration \[including rights of Palestinian refugees\]](#)
- [2021 General Synod Resolution: Declaration for a Just Peace between Palestine and Israel](#)
- [2025 General Synod Resolution: Declaration for an End to Genocide in Palestine](#)