

ADVOCATING FOR THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN LIVING UNDER ISRAELI OCCUPATION

Background: *Now in its 50th year, Israel's military occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, remains entrenched while instability and violence define much of life for Palestinian children. This resolution focuses on the widespread, systematic, and institutionalized ill-treatment of Palestinian children from the occupied West Bank who are arrested and detained by Israeli forces and prosecuted in an Israeli military court system that denies basic fair trial rights. It also highlights our responsibility as United Methodists and as U.S. citizens to take action on behalf of these children.*

Whereas Israel is the only country in the world that systematically prosecutes children in military courts, with approximately 500 to 700 children entering the Israeli military detention system in any given year,¹ and

Whereas in a 2013 landmark study of this detention system, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) reported that ill-treatment in the Israeli military detention system is "widespread, systematic, and institutionalized throughout the process,"² and

Whereas despite sustained engagement by UNICEF and repeated calls to end night arrests and ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention, Israeli authorities have persistently failed to implement practical changes to stop violence against child detainees,³ and

Whereas the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by every single member of the United Nations except the United States,⁴ and ratification by the United States could also underscore our nation's responsibility for humane treatment of all children,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the _____ Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church calls on the government of the United States to adhere to its own established law – in this case, the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act – by withholding military assistance from the State of Israel due to its practices of arrest and detention of Palestinian children, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this conference calls on the United States Senate to join with 196 other nations in ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child so as to bring stronger international pressure to bear on Israel to comply with the Convention's provisions, particularly those governing the treatment of children held in detention, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this 2018 annual conference take action by: 1) Relaying these two calls to their congregations; 2) Writing their members of Congress, as well as the President, Vice President, and Secretary of State, urging them to respond to our calls; and 3) Encouraging and facilitating their congregations to do the same.

1. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/children-behind-bars>
2. https://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_6_March_2013.pdf
3. https://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_6_March_2013.pdf
4. https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._ratification_of_the_Convention_on_the_Rights_of_the_Child