

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO PEACEFULLY ADDRESS INJUSTICE THROUGH BOYCOTTS, DIVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS

Whereas United Methodists and other religious communities have long used the peaceful methods of boycotts and divestment to stand in solidarity with oppressed people and to work for justice, and

Whereas such advocacy measures by the United Methodist Church have proven to be useful tools in helping to bring about a wide range of constructive social change, including the civil rights movement in the United States and ending of apartheid in South Africa, and

Whereas boycotts and divestment are constitutionally protected forms of free speech in the United States and many other nations,¹ and

Whereas in 2005, after studying the success of such efforts, a broad coalition of Palestinian civil society issued a call for a global movement of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) to advance the Palestinians' long-denied rights to self-determination, freedom, justice, and equality,² and

Whereas in 2012 the United Methodist General Conference approved the resolution "Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land" (#6111), which calls on "all nations to prohibit...the import of products made by companies in Israeli settlements on Palestinian land," i.e. calls for an international boycott of the Israeli settlements,³ and

Whereas in recent years more than a dozen United Methodist annual conferences have called for their own conference and/or the denomination to divest from companies that support and profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land,⁴ and

Whereas in 2016 the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church announced that five Israeli banks would be excluded from their investment portfolios,⁵ and

Whereas in 2017 seven annual conferences of the United Methodist Church voted to specifically affirm the right to peacefully address injustice through boycotts, divestment and sanctions,⁶ and

Whereas, due to the success of peaceful means of protesting injustice via boycott, divestment and sanctions, a recent wave of legislation has been proposed or has been passed in various state legislatures that imposes penalties on citizens and corporations for engaging in boycott, divestment and sanctions,⁷ and

Whereas, as a result of such state legislation, in 2017 the right of a Mennonite public school teacher to be considered for a job was denied specifically because she refused to reject a personal boycott of Israeli products in accordance with the stance of her church,⁸ and

Whereas the United States Congress is considering legislation that threatens to penalize the use of these time-honored, nonviolent, justice-seeking actions,⁹

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the [_____ Annual Conference or other church body] of the United Methodist Church opposes any state or federal legislation that seeks to restrict the right to address injustice through boycotts, divestment and sanctions, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [Conference Secretary or other person] write a letter to the President of the United States and to the Governor [plural if needed], the congressional representatives and

the members of the legislature [plural if needed] of [the state or states within the region of the conference or other church body], informing those elected officials of this resolution and attaching the full text of the resolution, said letter to include the approximate number of congregations and church members within the [conference or other United Methodist region] and/or within the respective state of the recipient, and

****BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the [Conference Secretary or other person] write a letter to the [head of state] and to the members of the [national or regional legislature], informing those elected officials of this resolution and attaching the full text of the resolution, said letter to include also the approximate number of congregations and church members within the [conference or other United Methodist region] and/or within the respective political region of the recipient, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [_____Annual Conference or other church body] urges all United Methodist annual conferences, congregations, and church members to contact their local, regional and national elected officials, to communicate this resolution and to advocate against anti-BDS legislation appearing anywhere in their country.

****Alternate version for conferences outside the U.S.** This should be omitted in resolutions to conferences inside the U.S.

1. US Supreme Court Volume [458](#) , Case [886](#) (1982)
<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/458/886/case.html>
2. OPEN LETTER - Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS, July 9, 2005
by [https://bdsmovement.net/news-listing-author/Palestinian civil society](https://bdsmovement.net/news-listing-author/Palestinian%20civil%20society)
3. **2012 UM Book of Resolutions #6111**
4. Baltimore Washington, California Nevada, California Pacific, Desert Southwest, Detroit, New York, California Nevada, West Ohio, Northern Illinois, Minnesota, New England, Oregon-Idaho, Pacific Northwest, Rocky Mountain.
5. “Israeli Banks on Ineligible List for Pension Agency” Jan. 13, 2016, United Methodist News Service <http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/israeli-banks-on-ineligible-list-for-pensions-agency>
6. Minnesota, New England, Upper New York, Great Plains, Desert Southwest, Oregon-Idaho, Florida <http://um-insight.net/perspectives/kairos-response-commends-resolutions-on/>
7. Tennessee, South Carolina, Illinois, Alabama, Colorado, Indiana, Florida, Virginia, Arizona, Georgia, Iowa, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Texas, Nevada, Kansas, North Carolina, Wisconsin <http://investmentwatchblog.com/here-is-a-list-of-the-17-states-that-have-adopted-anti-bds-legislation/>
8. “Teacher Sues over Kansas Law Banning Contracts with Israel Boycotters” - Wichita Eagle, October 11, 2017 <http://www.kansas.com/news/politics-government/article178313846.html>
9. US Senate Bill 720 – “Israel Anti-Boycott Act” www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/720