



August 7, 2015

An Open Letter to Hillary Clinton

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
120 West 45th Street, Suite 2700,
New York, NY 10036.

Dear Secretary Clinton,

As a United Methodist you know that our church has had a long history of defending oppressed people, both at home and abroad. As our founder, John Wesley, famously said, "The world is my parish," and we still consider that to be true today.

This is why we in United Methodist Kairos Response, a global movement in the United Methodist Church, work for the liberation of the oppressed people of Palestine. The Christians of Palestine have cried out to all the Christian churches to help them in their time of great distress through their document "Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth." This document is both a profound statement of faith and an urgent call for action. It has been signed by thousands of Christian Palestinians and endorsed by the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem.

We of United Methodist Kairos Response are not anti-Israel. We work with many Israelis to achieve a vision of justice and equality for all in the Holy Land. But we cannot condone all that the government of Israel does when it is morally indefensible.

We know you are aware of the many resolutions passed by the United Nations calling upon Israel to withdraw from the Palestinian territory that it now occupies. You are further aware of the Fourth Geneva Convention that outlines the standards and protections for civilians living under military occupation as the Palestinians do today. Violations of this convention are causing terrible suffering and hardship for the Palestinian people.

Through principled decisions about which products to purchase and which companies to invest in, we can help influence the movement of companies out of the illegal settlements. This is already happening, and as companies relocate within Israel's recognized borders, their movement provides incentives for the settler population to follow. Since you frequently condemned the settlements as Secretary of State, and since our denomination has long opposed them, we hope you will support all peaceful, nonviolent ways of ending the settlement enterprise.

Therefore, we urgently ask that you acknowledge the moral nature of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement to end the human rights abuses taking place against the Palestinian people by the government of Israel. Archbishop Desmond Tutu called for these same peaceful actions against the government of South Africa during the days of its apartheid, and he urges us to use these tools to achieve freedom for Palestinians today. The South African Council of Churches has also supported BDS, and today millions within the church are once again answering the call.

Within the United States, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Church of Christ, and our own United Methodist Church are supporting various aspects of BDS. The BDS movement has also been embraced by the historically influential Society of Friends (Quakers), who, though they may be small in number, contribute a great moral voice.

Together, our Christian communities are speaking through the BDS movement on behalf of the children of Palestine, 548 of whom were killed during the Israel/Gaza war in 2014. Together, our Christian communities are speaking through the BDS movement to the government of Israel about the egregious desecration of our Christian holy places such as the burning of the Church of the Loaves and Fishes. Together, our Christian communities are speaking through the BDS movement about the illegal destruction of Palestinian olive groves such as recently took place on June 11, 2015, in the village of Wadi Foquin, where 1,300 trees were destroyed.

We implore you to reconsider your position as expressed in your letter of July 2, 2015, to Haim Saban about the BDS movement. We look forward to your reply, which can be mailed to Rev. Michael Yoshii, Co-chair of United Methodist Kairos Response, Buena Vista United Methodist Church, 2311 Buena Vista Avenue, Alameda, CA 94501.

Yours in Christ,

Members of the Steering Committee and U.S. Policy Committee
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