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UNITED METHODIST GROUP CONDEMNS ISRAEL'S APARTHEID LAW

26 July 2018 – United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR) joins with [Palestinian civil society](#), [Jewish Voice for Peace](#) (JVP), the [Israel/Palestine Mission Network](#) (IPMN) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), [Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace](#) (PCAP), and all people of conscience who decry and condemn the [recent adoption by the Israeli legislature](#) of the **Nation State Law**. This bill now enshrines in Israel's **Basic Law**, the Israeli equivalent to a national constitution, the denial of equal rights for Palestinian Israeli citizens who comprise 20% or more of Israel's population.

We recognize that for many years, both law and practice in Israel have failed to protect essential human rights for minorities in Israeli society. However, as explained by the Palestinian [legal center Adalah](#), the Nation State Basic Law is now the “law of laws” in Israel and overrides any ordinary legislation. This anti-democratic law will enable more egregious racial discrimination than currently exists in Israel; it provides the status of a constitutional mandate for the apartheid policies of the Israeli state. ([See the text of the law here.](#))

UMKR notes the response to the Nation State Law by the [Palestinian BDS National Committee](#), including this statement by Palestinian activist Omar Barghouti: "If ever there was a time for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel's system of oppression, it is now. Israel's official adoption of apartheid opens the door for the Palestinian people, Arab nations and our allies around the world to pressure the UN to activate its anti-apartheid laws and impose serious sanctions on Israel like those imposed on apartheid South Africa."

We also note that, by identifying Israel as "the nation-state of the Jewish people," this law attempts to falsely claim that the state of Israel represents and acts on behalf of the worldwide Jewish community. On the contrary, many thousands of [Jewish citizens of dozens of countries on five continents](#) strongly oppose the state of Israel's oppressive policies towards the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories and within Israel.

UMKR commends the timely statement earlier last week by [thirty Jewish organizations](#) around the world in which they affirm their support for the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement and the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice and equality, while also rejecting attempts to falsely "conflate anti-Jewish racism with opposition to Israel's policies and system of occupation and apartheid."

In light of this new apartheid-codifying Israeli law and numerous other deeply disturbing actions and developments in 2018 – including but not limited to: the [relocation of the U.S. embassy](#) to Jerusalem; Israel's growing assault on [free speech rights](#) and its determination to [muzzle human rights organizations](#); the [ongoing destruction of Palestinian communities](#) and expansion of illegal settlements in the West Bank; the [massacre of unarmed Palestinian protesters](#) in which over 150 have been killed and over 16,000 thousand injured; Israel's [closure of Gaza's only commercial crossing](#), intensifying the already [catastrophic living conditions](#) for 2 million imprisoned Gazan residents; and Israel's [military assault on Gaza](#) late last week – UMKR pledges to continue and redouble our efforts to inform and mobilize the people of the global United Methodist Church and our fellow citizens throughout the world, working for the goal of freedom, equality and justice for all Palestinians and Israelis.

Founded in 2010, UMKR is an international grassroots movement of clergy and laity in the United Methodist Church connecting justice advocates in dozens of annual conferences (church regional bodies) on four continents. We are answering the urgent call of Palestinian Christians - in [*Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth*](#) - for effective action to achieve a just peace in the Holy Land. Learn more about our work at www.kairosresponse.org.

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