

EXCLUDE GOVERNMENT DEBT OF COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN PROLONGED MILITARY OCCUPATIONS

WHEREAS Amos 5:24 says “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” and Psalm 103:6 says “The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed,” and

WHEREAS The United Methodist Church, through its general agencies and annual conferences, has endeavored to be accountable to our Social Principles through screening against investment in military occupations,¹ and

WHEREAS The United Methodist Church’s Social Principles state “...we endorse the United Nations, its related bodies, the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court as the best instruments now in existence to achieve a world of justice and law,”² and

WHEREAS three nations have held subject populations under prolonged military occupation: Israel has occupied the Palestinian territories since 1967, Turkey has occupied Northern Cyprus since 1974, and Morocco has occupied Western Sahara since 1976, thus denying the subject populations their self-determination in violation of the system established by the Charter of the United Nations and International Law in general, and

WHEREAS the above-named occupying powers have been named in United Nations Security Council resolutions and/or International Court of Justice rulings as having engaged in prolonged military occupations and are thereby violators of international law and are responsible for human rights abuses, generally including reduction of food assistance to refugees, failure to protect civilian persons, land confiscation, home demolition, and violence against civilians,³ and

WHEREAS government debt (also called sovereign debt), especially that held in bonds denominated in foreign currencies,⁴ is unrestricted funds that a government uses at its own discretion and without any formal mechanism for advocacy by the bond holder, unlike stocks which represent an ownership interest in a corporation and provide a platform to advocate for change, and

WHEREAS holders of the government debt of countries complicit in prolonged military occupations are effectively financing the high military expenditures of those governments that are necessitated by that military occupation and holders of that debt are therefore earning money

¹ <https://mondoweiss.net/2017/07/united-methodists-boycott/>;
https://www.kairosresponse.org/pressrel_umc_divests_g4s.html;
https://www.kairosresponse.org/pr_umc_divests_israeli_banks_jan2016.html;
https://www.kairosresponse.org/pr_acs_divestment_2015.html;
https://www.kairosresponse.org/annual_conference_successes_2017.html

² The United Methodist Social Principles, ¶ 165.D <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/the-world-community>

³ For example: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2004/07/108912-international-court-justice-finds-israeli-barrier-palestinian-territory-illegal#.WltesTLMzfY>; [http://undocs.org/S/RES/2430\(2018\)](http://undocs.org/S/RES/2430(2018));
[http://undocs.org/S/RES/2414\(2018\)](http://undocs.org/S/RES/2414(2018)); [http://undocs.org/S/RES/2334\(2016\)](http://undocs.org/S/RES/2334(2016)); <https://tinyurl.com/ya48dl45>

⁴ <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/sovereign-debt.html>

in the form of interest payments from the human rights abuses and violations of international law of those countries, and

WHEREAS Wespath Benefits and Investments, the holder of United Methodist pension funds (formally named the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits), in their Human Rights investment guideline says “Wespath also may exclude from investment the sovereign debt of any country demonstrating a prolonged and systematic pattern of human rights abuses,”⁵

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that _____ Conference prayerfully calls upon the boards and agencies throughout the connection and its own investment managers to add to their human rights guidelines explicit language with regard to governmental debt so as to exclude those governments maintaining a prolonged military occupation that have been the subject of United Nations Security Council resolutions and/or International Court of Justice rulings, and to align their portfolios accordingly, avoiding the governmental debt of each such country until the time when each government ends their military occupation, and

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that _____ Conference submit this resolution to General Conference 2020.

⁵ https://www.wespath.com/investment_philosophy/human-rights/guideline/