



April 21, 2016

Dear Members of the United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits:

We greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thank you for all you do for those who devote their lives to the United Methodist Church. Many are members of UMKR.

We also thank you for your recent divestment from three settlement companies and the exclusion of five Israeli banks that provide funding for the occupation. Your good actions resonated around the world, and you began the process of aligning United Methodist funds with the professed values of our church.

Conscience dictates, however, that we urge you to (1) remove the remaining settlement companies (most of which were purchased after GC 2012) from United Methodist investments and (2) divest from three companies the church has long engaged without meaningful success.

In 2012, the full church called on all nations to boycott products from the illegal settlements ([Resolution #6111](#)). Investing in companies located in these settlements, some of which produce those very products we are asking all nations to boycott, is a contradiction of the church's clear position. In January 2016, the highly respected organization Human Rights Watch issued a [report](#) stating: "the context of human rights abuse to which settlement business activity contributes is so pervasive and severe that **businesses should cease carrying out activities inside or for the benefit of settlements.**" This adds to the urgency of our request.

Caterpillar, Hewlett Packard (which is now two companies) and Motorola Solutions have long been engaged by the Pension Board staff as part of the Ecumenical Action Group for a Just Peace in Israel/Palestine (EAG). For this reason, we were surprised recently to hear the board's staff say: "In our opinion, they are not complicit in human rights violations." The EAG, Israeli research organizations, all our Holy Land missionaries and six major denominations have found that these companies play major roles in Israeli abuses of Palestinian rights, including home demolitions, restrictions on their freedom of movement, and services to illegal settlements built on Palestinian land.

It should be noted that apartheid - a brutally enforced system of separate roads, housing, water allocation and discriminatory laws - is a [war crime](#). An independent legal [analysis](#) commissioned by the South African government found that apartheid is being practiced by Israel. The continued seizure of private property and abductions of children from their homes are also illegal under international law. Church funds must not be used to sustain such systematic oppression.

Please consider the moral standing and the reputation of the United Methodist Church, and let us join our sisters and brothers of the Presbyterian Church USA, the United Church of Christ, the Alliance of Baptists, the United Church of Canada, the Unitarian Universalists, and the Quakers by taking decisive action as a denomination to divest.

The list of companies we are asking the board to divest is finite. They are listed on the following page, and all but five are new investments in companies with settlement operations. Since this is an area of the world where the Board has acknowledged that human rights violations occur, we hope that settlement activities will be considered before new purchases of stock are made.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss the specific companies with you and hope that together we can make sure our church's investments reflect its beliefs on human rights.

Yours in Christ,  
Members of the Steering Committee  
United Methodist Kairos Response

Cc: Delegates to General Conference 2016

Notes: On March 24, 2016, the *UN Human Rights Commission* passed 32-0 a resolution calling on the world's countries to refrain from providing any assistance to the illegal settlements. Fifteen countries abstained. The commission warned companies against entering into business transactions in the settlements "so as not to risk being involved in human rights violations." Its warning also included companies that aid the occupation in other ways, and directed that a list of such companies be prepared.

**Our Pension Fund owns stock in the following companies with operations in illegal settlements our church opposes. Most are new additions since General Conference 2012.**

1. **AZRIELI GROUP** (TLV:AZRG) - subsidiary Sonol has petrol stations and convenience stores in many illegal Israeli settlements across the West Bank. **NEW**
2. **BEZEQ** (TLV:BEZQ) - provides telecommunication services to all the illegal Israeli settlements, army bases and checkpoints in the West Bank. **NEW**
3. **CELLCOM** (NYSE:CEL) - provides cellular communication services to many illegal settlements and Israeli soldiers in occupied territory; has sales and customer service centers in settlements. **NEW**
4. **CEMEX** (AMEX:CEQ) - has operations in three illegal West Bank settlements.
5. **DELEK GROUP LTD.** (TLV:DLEKG) - operates gas stations and convenience stores in five illegal settlements; supplies fuel to Israeli army bases and vehicles in occupied land. **NEW**
6. **FRUTAROM INDUSTRIES LTD.** (TLV:FRUT) - owns a food additives' plant in the West Bank industrial zone of Mishor Edomim, part of the illegal settlement of Ma'ale Adumim. **NEW**
7. **HEIDELBERG CEMENT AG** (ETR:HEI, FRA:HEI) - has a subsidiary called Hanson Israel with operations in two illegal West Bank settlements.
8. **HP ENTERPRISE** (NYSE:HPE) - operates a development center in the illegal settlement of Beitar Illit; provides services to illegal settlements of Modi'in Illit and Ariel; equips checkpoints.
9. **PARTNER COMMUNICATIONS** (NASDAQ:PTNR, TLV:PTNR) - has sales and service centers and infrastructure in many illegal settlements. **NEW**
10. **PAZ OIL COMPANY LTD.** (TLV:PZOL) - operates gas stations in eight settlements. **NEW**
11. **RAMI LEVY CHAIN STORES** (TLV:RMLI) - is building a giant superstore in the illegal settlement of Ariel; has stores in other illegal settlements, including Ma'ale Adumim. **NEW**
12. **SHUFERSOL LTD.** (TASE:SAE) - has supermarkets in three illegal settlements. **NEW**

**CATERPILLAR, HEWLETT PACKARD AND MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS** have been engaged by the board and by other church investors for 7-11 years. It is time to divest from these companies as well.