

# *Sisters & Brothers in Christ,*

As past moderators of the General Assembly, we want urge you to vote in favor of INT-02 "On Recognition That Israel's Laws, Policies, and Practices Constitute Apartheid Against the Palestinian People"

We urge you to support it for the following reasons:

1. PCUSA mission history is long & rich, going back to 1823 when our work began in Lebanon. As a result of that mission history, we are the largest Protestant denomination in the Middle East, with one million Presbyterians in Egypt as the largest group. Your vote in favor will give hope to our sisters & brother in Christ in the region.

2. This overture is about the laws, policies, and actions of the Israeli government and not about the Jewish faith or Jewish people.

3. According to the Rome Statute, the International Criminal Court defines the crime of apartheid as "inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them."

4. According to the former UN Special Rapporteur for the region, "There is today in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967 a deeply discriminatory dual legal system and political system, that privileges the 700,000 Israeli Jewish settlers living in the 300 illegal Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank."

5. This separation system in the law includes checkpoints, a separation wall, and segregated roads for Jewish and non-Jewish people.

6. Israel's Nation State Law of 2018 codifies a privileged status for Israel's Jewish citizens and discriminates against any non-Jewish persons.

7. For the last 40 years, Palestinian civil society has been telling us that they have been living under an apartheid system all over Israel & Palestine. The PC(USA) General Assembly has previously received and recommended for study a document from Palestinian Christians naming Israel's practices apartheid.



8. In 2021 the Israeli human rights organization [B'tselem declared](#) that Israel is an apartheid state.

9. In 2021 the renowned human rights organization [Human Rights Watch declared](#) that Israel is practicing apartheid on the Palestinian people.

10. In 2022 [Amnesty International declared](#) that Israel is practicing an apartheid rule over the Palestinian people.

11. This overture is a truth-telling witness to the the suffering of the Palestinian people.

12. Healthy interfaith relationships are built on speaking the truth about human rights injustices in all the countries of the world, including the United States and Israel.

13. Labeling legitimate criticism of Israeli government policies that oppress Palestinians as anti-Israel or anti-Semitic is a thinly veiled attempt to silence any criticism of Israeli government actions.

14. Acknowledging that Israeli government actions meet the definition of apartheid is done with the hope that it will lead to a process of reconciliation, similar to what happened in South Africa after apartheid was acknowledged.

15. This is an anti-racism issue. Archbishop Desmond Tutu (who urged a previous General Assembly to pass a similar overture), the Movement for Black Lives, and numerous other groups of people of color have recognized that this is apartheid.

16. For the sake of the Gospel & for the sake of our sisters & brothers in Israel & Palestine,

***we urge you to vote in favor of this overture.***

*Rev. John M. Fife, Moderator of the 204th GA, PC(USA) 1992*

*Elder Patricia Brown, Moderator of the 209th GA, PC(USA) 1997*

*Rev. Fahed Abuakel, Moderator of the 214th GA, PC(USA) 2002*

*Elder Rick Ufford-Chase, Moderator of the 216th GA, PC(USA) 2004*

*Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow, Moderator of the 218th GA, PC(USA) 2009*

*Elder Heath Rada, Moderator of the 221st GA, (PCUSA) 2014*

*Rev. Dr. Jan Edmiston, Moderator of the 222nd GA, PC(USA) 2016*

*Elder Elona Street-Stewart, Co-Moderator of the 224th GA, PC(USA) 2020*

*Rev. Gregory J. Bentley, Co-Moderator of the 224th GA, PC(USA) 2020*