



A Call for Peace between Israel and Palestine

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With support from a CUSJ Working Group

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Executive Summary

CUSJ decided to respond to requests from Palestinian civil society organizations, Christian Palestinians and non-Zionist Jews to boycott and divest from Israeli products and companies that promote or profit from the illegal occupation of Palestine. We formed a study group to look into the complex issues.

We reflected on the many diverse issues in the Middle East conflict from many differing perspectives. This paper is long because it includes this reflection on the many concerns as well as a theological reflection drawing on many sources.

In the course of our studies, we came to understand that, though Israelis have many grievances and concerns, the on-going oppression of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza is an unacceptable violation of human rights and cannot go on. We found that Israel is either unwilling or unable to solve the politics in its own country to make the necessary changes. To obtain a resolution that gives Palestinians dignity, respect, and human rights, as outlined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, will

require significant international will and pressure toward Israel.

Palestinians and their allies around the world, including Christians, Muslims, and non-Zionist Jews, have strongly shifted from a reactive, military strategy to a pro-active, diplomatic strategy to achieve their rights. The Boycott and Divestment strategy is a strong component of this. Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice recommends to Unitarians in Canada that we support a call to boycott Israeli products and divest from companies which support the Israeli occupation of Palestine, such as Hewlett Packard, Motorola, Caterpillar, L 3, and Northrup Grummond.

We examined the common desire among Unitarians for balance when considering Israeli and Palestinian claims on the conflict. We recognized the lack of respect for human rights by both Israel and Palestine. We recognized the great work to be done to create a climate of respect for human rights for all people throughout the whole region, no matter what their race or ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity. In addition, we noted that the ability of Palestine to seriously work on its own governance practices is severely impaired by the occupation.

Recommendations

1. CUSJ calls on Unitarians to stop looking the other way and become engaged in supporting a peace-making process.
2. CUSJ recognizes the Kairos Palestine document of 2009 by the Palestine Christian Community calling for:
 - a. The end of the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza,
 - b. Giving non-Jews living inside of '48 Israel¹ full democratic rights, and
 - c. Recognizing the right of Palestinian refugees, like all refugees, to either return or receive compensation, as guaranteed under the Geneva Convention and reaffirmed by the United Nations.
 - d. In addition, CUSJ deplores Israel's actions of taking Palestinian homes to build new settlements in Israel and the West Bank and urges Israel to stop immediately the new settlement process currently underway on Bedouin land in the Naqab.
3. CUSJ supports a just settlement for Palestinians in accordance with international law and recommends Unitarians support boycotts and sanctions as an effective and non-violent means of putting pressure on Israel to come to the table.
4. We call on both Israel and Palestine to work toward societies which give full equality, human rights, and rights of democratic citizenship, to all people living in their lands, regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation, as laid out in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.
5. We ask Unitarians in Canada to:
 - a. Support the boycott of Israeli products, and in particular, the boycott of products made in illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank. The United Church is launching a boycott of Keeter Plastic, SodaStream, and Ahava. For more information go to www.canadianboycottcoalition.ca.
 - b. Write the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister John Baird to ask for justice for Palestinians. Ask the Prime Minister for specific things such as: "to require products produced in illegal Israeli settlements to be barred from Canada-Israel Free Trade benefits, in a way similar to the recent EU ruling," and "to cancel the charitable status of the Jewish National Fund, which systematically expropriates Palestinian land for use by Jews only."
 - c. Look at their own investments and write the Canada Pension Plan and other pension plans about divestment.
 - d. Talk with Palestinians and Jews in their communities in Canada to learn how we might become effective bridge-builders towards a just peace for both sides.

The current cycle of vindication, self-justification, and oppression must end.

Unitarian Context

Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice (CUSJ) is a national, liberal religious organization founded to actively promote Unitarian values through social action.

CUSJ develops and maintains a vibrant network for social action at the local, national, and international levels for the relief of discrimination based on:

- religion, race, age, ability, sexual orientation, and other grounds
- violations of human rights
- poverty and economic injustice
- environmental degradation
- breaches of peace, security and the democratic process.

CUSJ is a membership organization and when it speaks, it speaks only for its members and not for either the Canadian Unitarian Council or for any particular Unitarian congregation.

In 2002, the Canadian Unitarian Council passed a resolution supporting an end to the cycle of violence, a two-state solution, a shared Jerusalem, and an end to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. (<http://cuc.ca/resolutions-special-2002-peace/>). It passed a peace resolution in 2004 that included support for the Canadian UN Document, "Responsibility to Protect" which calls on the world community to intervene at a variety of levels when a vulnerable people is facing discrimination and persecution. The Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice wrote to the Canadian Government in January



2010, calling for a neutral and mediator role for Canada rather than a one-sided pro-Israeli position supported by the present Conservative government.

Many individual Unitarians across Canada are highly involved with the battle for justice for Palestinians. They hosted a table at the CUC AGM. CUSJ was also invited to get more involved and to take a stronger stand for justice by Independent Jewish Voices and Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East.

Several members of the CUSJ board began to research and investigate the issues. The first deep reflection was conducted by Ria Heynen (First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa), Christine Duvander (Unitarian Church of Montreal), Bob Staveley (First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa), and Frances Deverell (First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa) with advice from Diana Ralph (Independent Jewish Voices). This group decided to recommend that the CUSJ Board take a stronger stand. This paper comes out of that reflection and integrates feedback from a number of people who are close to the issue.



Rev. Frances
Deverell

1. Introduction

1.1. The twentieth century has been a time of violence and oppression in an era where we have the means of mass destruction and genocide. We have seen what humans are capable of at their worst and we continue in these patterns of warfare into the twenty-first century. We have seen two world wars, the German holocaust, communist repression in Russia, genocide in Rwanda, apartheid in South Africa, and repressive regimes in the Arab world and in South America. We know too well how deep the traumatic effects can be on any violently suppressed people or nation. We only have to look at the impact of the Canadian residential school policy and the reservation system on our own First Nations here at home. Both the Jewish and the Palestinian peoples, in Israel and around the world, have been exposed to extreme trauma.

1.2. Karen Armstrong in her book *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life* says that these kinds of traumatic experiences “leave psychic scars that persist long after the events. They affect the way the new generation is brought up and can infiltrate the religious, intellectual, ethical and social development of a country. People who have been taught to despise themselves cannot easily respect others.....”

1.3. Such trauma combined with on-going cultures of fear and oppression can bring whole populations to hate and brutalize others. We recognize and acknowledge this

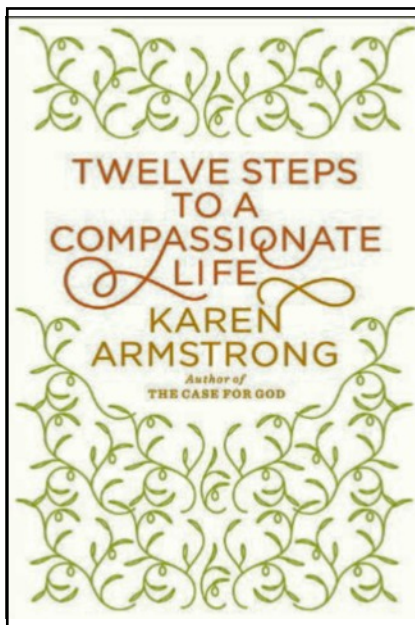
painful past of our Jewish and Palestinian sisters and brothers.

1.4. Remaining silent any longer on the unjust Israeli policies toward the Palestinian population since 1948 would do an enormous disservice not only to the Palestinians but also to the Jewish people in Israel and elsewhere in the world. It is time for a change, for new policies, and for healing to begin.

2. Why should CUSJ take a position on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?

2.1. It is not the role of a group like CUSJ to try to decide who is at fault or to name a solution for others. What we can do is to condemn the use of violence on both sides of this conflict and call for a peace process involving mutual respect, listening, and dialogue.

2.2. There is an on-going imbalance of power leading to a terrible situation of injustice for Palestinian people in the Middle East. Two peoples have been at war since the creation of Israel, with no end in sight. Palestinians have periodically attacked Israel with rockets and suicide bombers as an expression of frustration against oppression. Fortunately, Palestinians have developed better, non-violent strategies to promote awareness of their on-going oppression. There have been no such suicide bombings since 2008. Meanwhile, Israel continues to use all the force of a huge security system, bombers, and military invasion to suppress Palestinian resistance. Thousands of Palestinians



are in Israeli prisons including children. Palestinians have no sense of security. Children are traumatized.

- 2.3. For many years the Palestinian strategy of resistance to oppression with rockets and suicide bombers, targeted at civilians and sometimes children, has caused psychological trauma and disruption of daily life in Israel. Israelis had no sense of security. Children were traumatized. Israel's response was to build the walls and dedicated roads and these attacks have been in the main stopped. But they only maintain this sense of security based on a regime of military oppression.
- 2.4. In the past five years, Israeli retaliation by the military has involved frequent night attacks, house demolitions, incarcerations, displacements, with 2300 killed, 700 wounded, including many children. Communities in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are also exposed to constant psychological trauma, disruption of daily life, poor infrastructure, extreme poverty, and lack of freedom. Palestinians are crushed by the repression, yet continue to resist.
- 2.5. CUSJ has been asked by 171 Palestinian civil society organizations, Christian Palestinians, and non-Zionist Jews to boycott and divest from Israeli products and companies which promote or profit from the illegal occupation of Palestine (<http://www.bdsmovement.net/>).

3. Current Situation

- 3.1. Israel continues to violate Palestinian human rights (in direct violation of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights which Jewish organizations fought so hard to implement). It maintains a brutal and illegal siege of Gaza. In occupied Palestine it continues to construct settlements and roads for Jews only and to expropriate over 45% of West Bank land (the most fertile parts and most of the water). Palestinians living in the West Bank are subjected to military rule including harassment, arrest and detention without charge or trial, often for years. Israeli Jewish schools and services in both the West Bank and Gaza are well funded, while Palestinian schools and infrastructure are systematically under-funded. Palestinian Israeli citizens face severe housing, job and educational discrimination.² As President Obama put it in his address to the Knesset in March, 2013:

[The] Palestinian people's right to self-determination and justice must also be recognized. Put yourself in their shoes—look at the world through their eyes. It is not fair that a Palestinian child cannot grow up in a state of her own, and lives with the presence of a foreign army that controls the movements of her parents every single day. It is not just when settler violence against Palestinians goes unpunished. It is not right to prevent Palestinians from farming their lands; to restrict a student's ability to move around the West Bank; or to displace Palestinian families from their home. Neither occupation nor expulsion is the answer. Just as Israelis built a state in their homeland, Palestinians have a right to be a free people in their own land.



U.S. President Barack Obama

- 3.2. If one looks at a map of the West Bank today, it is hard to escape the conclusion that Israel is forming itself as a single, apartheid state, with full rights for Jews and few rights for Palestinians.



- 3.3. Palestinian elections of 2006 were rejected by Israel who could not accept a Palestinian government led by Hamas (the clear winner with 74 seats to Fatah's 45). The Quartet, a major financial backer of the Palestinian National Authority, cut funds to Palestine in response to Hamas's victory, and Israel withheld tax revenues until the economy collapsed and the government was forced out—to be replaced by the Palestinian

Authority in the West Bank (led by Fatah) and a Hamas regime in Gaza. Elections have been impossible since 2006 because of the interference of the occupation.³ There is talk of new elections in 2013, but going forward is difficult. Palestinians have little opportunity to develop their democracy without full access to such democratic rights as freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. They have few options of resistance. This is their challenge—to continue to resist violent protest and to build the democratic foundation for a stable Palestinian state that provides security for its people and its neighbours and human rights for all its citizens. They can't win their freedom alone. They need international support.

3.4. The Canadian government is currently a strong ally of Israel, with the United States, uncritically supporting its policies. Obama took a more balanced position while visiting Israel in spring 2013.⁴ Canada is engaged in treaties with Israel that involve sharing of sensitive information and training of its police and military in crowd control tactics.⁵

3.5. The military strength of Israel (including nuclear weapons), supported by the United States, makes Israel simultaneously both a potentially stabilizing force, and a potential threat to world security. Its frequent military warnings against Iran raise the temperature rather than lower it.⁶ Its commitment to pre-emptive strike tactics (Lebanon in 2006 and in Gaza 2008/9 and 2012) keep the whole region under constant alert. Israel is a nuclear power that has not signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.⁷ Its current military strategies pose a constant threat to world peace.

3.6. Israel has been tapping into Palestinian water resources since 1967. There is evidence that it is drawing down the aquifers faster than can be sustained over the long run.⁸ There is concern that no Palestinian State could be viable unless it can have control over its own water resources. In general, a separate Palestinian State would also need control over all its natural resources in order to establish a viable economy. New discoveries of oil and gas in Israel and off the Gaza Strip make it difficult to imagine that Israel will

ever willingly give up control of these territories.⁹ The United States may also prefer to see this oil and gas stay under Israeli, rather than Palestinian, control. Geopolitical dynamics would suggest the Palestinian people will never have a hope of justice or freedom without strong international pressure on their behalf.

3.7. A full reading of United Nations Resolution 194, and in particular Section 11, shows that the international community agreed to take responsibility for placing Jerusalem and the surrounding area “including the present municipality of Jerusalem plus the surrounding villages and towns, the most Eastern of which shall be Abu Dis; the most Southern, Bethlehem; the most Western, Ein Karim (including also the built-up area of Motsa); and the most Northern, Shu'fat, should be accorded special and separate treatment from the rest of Palestine and should be placed under effective United Nations control.” It also committed to set up the structures necessary to effect the right of return in section 11 for all refugees—Palestinian and Jewish. To this point in time, the international community, including Canada, has not kept these commitments. Palestinians

do not have access to their holy sites in Jerusalem and area, and Israel is closing down Palestinian communities in those areas and taking them over.

3.8. The Unitarian Universalist Association action of immediate witness (2002) is highly worth reading (<http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/13983.shtml>). Independent Jewish Voices (2009), The World Council of Churches' Amman call (2007), the Presbyterian Church (2008), Kairos Christian Palestinians (2009), The United Church of Canada (2012), the United Methodists (2012), and the United Church of Christ, and The Anglican Synod of Canada (July 7, 2013) have all taken positions on this conflict to address injustice against Palestinians. There is a growing movement to support boycotts and divestment to press Israel to end its illegal occupation of the West Bank, to provide equal rights to all citizens inside Israel, and to respect the right of Palestinian refugees, like all refugees, to either return home or receive compensation (<http://www.bdsmovement.net/>). The United



New discoveries of oil and gas off the Gaza strip.

Methodists voted to join the divestment movement in June 2013. Canadian Unitarians have remained silent.¹⁰

For more information see the links at <http://cusj.org/issues/peace/israel-palestine/>.

4. Theological Ground for Action

- 4.1. Unitarians and Universalists affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person and promote justice, equity and compassion in human relations. We work together towards the goal of world community with peace, justice and liberty for all. We also promote the democratic process at all levels of society as the primary route to just relations and conflict resolution among peoples. At the international level we support the United Nations in its efforts to establish and promote international law as the way to create peace among nations.
- 4.2. Unitarians and Universalists affirm the understanding of the universe as an interdependent web of all existence. This interdependence “has become the daily reality of our globalized world. Our interdependence makes it both possible and necessary that we see the peoples of the world as one community in which the security of each nation is entwined with the security of all others.”¹¹
- 4.3. “We reject as false the sharp separation of good and evil, refusing to assign individuals and nations into one category or the other. Moral dualism can blind us to our own and our nation’s capacity for evil and to the inherent worth and dignity of those whom our nation labels as enemies.”¹² As we make our statement, it is not our intention to make wrong either Israeli or Palestinian people. It is our intention to promote the cessation of unjust and illegal actions and to encourage both Israelis and Palestinians to engage in a cooperative, non-violent peace process once the occupation has ceased.
- 4.4. We take inspiration from the words and deeds of prophetic women and men such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela, and Thich Nhat Hanh, who taught us the techniques of non-violent struggle to overcome oppression. We take inspiration from the wisdom of the world’s great reli-



Thich Nhat Hanh

gious traditions including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and their holy texts.

- 4.5. We find that the prophets in the Hebrew scriptures proclaim that God takes the side of the oppressed and calls us to mercy, justice and humility in relation to the poor. The radical message of Jesus was one of inclusion of the “other”, respect for the humanity of those typically rejected by society, love, and peace. Gandhi taught us to “be the peace” that we want to see in the world. We must be strong in ourselves, speak truth to power, and work towards change through non-violent resistance. King also taught that we must be “tough minded and must be thoroughly informed and relentless in our search for truth” tempered by compassionate hearts. In the words revealed to the Prophet Mohammed as provided in the Qur’an, “the servants of the Most Gracious are those who tread softly on the earth and when the ignorant address them reply with words of peace.”
- 4.6. Thich Nhat Hanh wrote in *Love in Action*, “The essence of nonviolence is love. Out of love and the willingness to act selflessly, strategies, tactics, and techniques for a nonviolent struggle arise naturally. Nonviolence is not a dogma; it is a process. Other struggles may be fueled by greed, hatred, fear or ignorance, but a non-violent one cannot use such blind sources of energy, for they will destroy those involved and also the struggle itself. Nonviolent action, born of the awareness of suffering and nurtured by love, is the most effective way to confront adversity.”
- 4.7. “The purpose of the church is to increase the sum total of love and justice in the world.” Beth Miller/Gordon McKee-man (Unitarian Universalist Association). The World Council of Churches sees the role of the religious communities as working with the parties toward a just peace that aligns with international law and respects and serves all the peoples of the region. No military solution involving violence on either side is acceptable. The Palestinian people are calling to us: “risk the curses and abuse that will be aimed at you [and the accusations of anti-Semitism], and stand in solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and sisters of all faiths as we defiantly reject the possibility that the occupation will continue.”¹³

5. Human Rights

5.1. Professor Jeff Halper spoke to the Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church in Chicago in 2007. He talked about the tremendous commitment the Jewish people have always had to human rights and civil rights. Though the original draft of the Declaration of Human Rights was written by a Canadian lawyer,



Jeff Halper is Director of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD)



John Peters Humphrey

John Peters Humphrey in 1946, it was pushed through the UN by French Jew, René Cassin (Nobel Peace Prize 1968) with the help of Eleanor Roosevelt. The Fourth Geneva Convention was formulated in 1948 against the backdrop of the Holocaust. The American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith, Hadassah and

others were crucial in the adoption of the Declaration because, in the wake of the Holocaust, the international community couldn't really refuse the Jews. With the help of these Jewish organizations Cassin and others were able to push through the four treaties of the Geneva Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

5.2. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights states that all persons have human rights that cannot be taken away. The rights presented are particularly relevant to the Palestinian situation:

5.2.1. Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.



René Cassin 81-year old French winner of the 1968 Nobel Peace prize and UN prize for Human Rights

5.2.2. Article 2: Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration without distinction of any kind: (list followed)

5.2.3. Article 3: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person.

5.2.4. Article 4: No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.

5.2.5. Article 5: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

5.2.6. Article 6: Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

5.2.7. Article 7: All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.

5.2.8. Article 8: Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights.

5.2.9. Article 9: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile. Article 10 gives a right to a fair and public hearing.

5.2.10. Article 11: gives the presumption of innocence.

5.2.11. Article 12: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour or reputation.

5.2.12. Article 13: Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

5.2.13. Article 15: Everyone has the right to a nationality; no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

5.2.14. Article 17: No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

5.2.15. Article 18: Freedom of thought and religion; Article 19: Freedom of speech; Article 20: Freedom of assembly and association;

5.2.16. Article 21: Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. The will of the people is the basis of the authority of the government, based on universal and equal suffrage using a secret ballot.

5.2.17. Article 22: The right to social security and a fair share of a country's resources; Article 23: The right to work and be paid equal pay for work of equal value. The right to join unions; Article 24: the right to leisure and holidays with pay. Article 25: A fair standard of living

including housing, food, clothing, medical care, and education.

- 5.3. Jeff Halper suggests that the international community has a responsibility to both monitor violations of the Convention and to enforce them. He thinks we have failed in this duty, and that a just and sustainable peace will come to Israel/Palestine only when Israel is held accountable for policies and actions in accordance with human rights, international law, and UN resolutions.

6. Security

- 6.1. Unitarians in Canada are actively concerned about the security and well being of all peoples in the Middle East and around the world. We believe security is best achieved when people are able to work to fulfill the basic needs of life: housing, food, clothing, energy, water, education and health care. We believe security is best achieved when people live together in a spirit of equality and mutual respect.
- 6.2. We note that in the Middle East both Israelis and Palestinians live in a state of insecurity, although for Palestinians the fears are daily in their face because of on-going military harassment. See the following statistics by the Jewish human rights organization B'Tselem.
- 6.3. It is saddest when the casualties are children. To their credit, both groups have made serious efforts to reduce their civilian casualties in recent years—Israel using sophisticated intelligence and technology, and Palestinians shifting strate-

gies toward building an international peace movement instead of using suicide bombers.

- 6.4. CUSJ believes that a lack of serious effort to resolve the issue of Palestinian rights and the on-going military conflict is counterproductive for security for the whole area, and in fact for the world. This military occupation combined with a culture of fear does not produce the security and stability that Israelis and Palestinians both seek.
- 6.5. Both Israelis and Palestinians live in fear of homelessness. Israel fears loss of the Jewish nature of its state if it were to respect the right of Palestinian refugees to return and if it were to grant citizenship to Palestinians currently living stateless under military occupation in the West Bank. Palestinians live in an on-going state of fear and powerlessness. They fear they will never have a viable homeland. A solution to the problems in the Middle East must either address the fears of both sides or dispel the myths, and it must address the injustices. There are many, many proposals for ways to protect Jewish culture, religion, and even political power while still recognizing the right of Palestinian refugees (like all other refugees in the world) to return. The purpose of the boycott and divestment movement is to put an end to the increasing injustices and to create an atmosphere where Palestinians can come to the negotiating table for real dialogue in an atmosphere of equality and mutual respect.
- 6.6. There is a lack of respect for human rights by both Israelis and Palestinians. We recognize the great work to be done to create a climate of respect for human rights for all people throughout the whole region, no matter what their race or ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity. We call on both Israel and Palestine to ensure that all people living in their territory have full equality, respect, and human rights as laid out in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

7. Call to Action

7.1. *Our call to action asks Unitarians to become engaged with the Palestinian-Israeli dilemma, and to participate in building peace processes that will make a culture of peace possible. We believe this will require pressure on both sides to make real changes.*

- 7.2. We call on the Palestinians to stop shooting rockets or sending suicide bombers into Israel.

	Break down of deaths	
	Israelis	Palestinians
Children killed (More on the impact on children)	Remember these children 129	Remember these children 1,519
Civilians killed*	B'Tselem 731	B'Tselem 3,535-4,226
People killed during targeted killing	1	B'Tselem 408 or more
People who were object of a targeted killing	1	B'Tselem 238
People killed on their own land	B'Tselem 596 (53.8%)	B'Tselem 6,756 (98.9%)
People killed on other's land	B'Tselem 508 (46.2%)	73 (1.1%)

*The Palestinian people do not have a military, so the usual classification of civilian is not used. Instead B'Tselem provides data on the number of Palestinians who did not participate in hostilities, a significantly more stringent qualification than the one used to identify Israeli civilians.

We call on the Israeli government to stop all illegal activities according to international law including: evicting Palestinians from their homes, destroying Palestinian villages, and building settlements on Palestinian territory. We call on Israel to end the military occupation and to initiate a process of normalization with Palestinians in this area so that all people have full human rights and access to democratic process.

- 7.3. CUSJ acknowledges the Kairos Palestine document of 2009 written by the Palestinian Christian Community calling on the international community to recognize the injustices and the suffering in Palestine over six decades. It asks us to pressure Israel to bring itself in alignment with international law by:

- 7.3.1. ending the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza,
- 7.3.2. giving non-Jews living inside of '48 Israel full democratic rights, and
- 7.3.3. recognizing the right of Palestinian refugees, like all refugees, to either return or receive compensation, as guaranteed under the Geneva Convention and reaffirmed by United Nations Resolution 194.
- 7.3.4. In addition, CUSJ deplors Israel's actions of taking Palestinian homes and building new settlements in Israel and the West Bank. Israeli settlements contravene the 4th Geneva convention and have been ruled illegal by the International Court of Justice. We urge Israel to stop immediately the new settlement process currently underway on Bedouin land in the Naqab.

- 7.4. The CUSJ Board has voted to propose to its members, to Unitarian Congregations, and to the Canadian Unitarian Council that we support the



Palestinian mom holds photo of her suicide-bomber son.

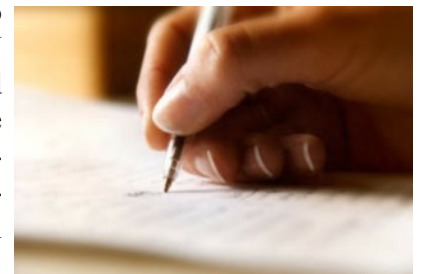
Palestinians in their aspirations to a just settlement to this conflict in alignment with international law.

- 7.4.1. We recommend to CUSJ Chapters and to individuals and congregations that they support the BDS (boycott, divestment, and sanctions) campaign in whatever way they can.

We believe this campaign can be an effective and non-violent means of putting pressure on Israel to come to the table.

- 7.4.2. In particular, but not exclusively, we recommend that Unitarians focus their boycott efforts on companies doing business in Israeli Settlements on the West Bank. We recommend that Unitarians support the United Church focus on Keeter Plastic, Soda Stream, and Ahava. Actions could include writing letters to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister John Baird, asking them to work towards a just peace for Palestinians. Ask the Prime Minister for specific things such as (suggested

wording in quotes): "to require products produced in illegal Israeli settlements to be barred from Canada-Israel Free Trade benefits, in a way similar to the recent EU ruling," and "to cancel the charitable status of the Jewish National



Prime Minister Harper (above) and Foreign Minister John Baird.



Israeli soldier fires tear gas at demonstrators in Gaza.

Fund, which systematically expropriates Palestinian land for use by Jews only."

- 7.4.3. Unitarians could write letters to the Canada Pension Plan and other pension plans, asking them to divest of stocks on the boycott and divestment campaign.

- 7.5. CUSJ calls on both Israel and Palestine to work toward societies which give full equality, human rights, and rights of democratic

citizenship, to all people living in their lands, regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation, as laid out in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights

7.6. CUSJ calls on the international community to fulfill its obligations in the Middle East. This includes:

7.6.1. Respecting the growing democratic processes in Palestine and recognizing its elected leadership;

7.6.2. Supporting the peace process as it evolves;

7.6.3. Establishing United Nations Secured areas, particularly in Jerusalem and area as defined in Resolution 194, Section 11.

7.7. We also recommend Unitarians actively support

another. Let us become a bridge toward understanding and creative solutions that may even involve a larger region than the current borders of Israel and Palestine. We must be a witness to the value that security cannot be achieved in a war zone, and that militarism and continued settlement building will not provide the security Israel seeks. Violent attacks will not provide access to the justice that Palestinians seek. Ending the injustices against Palestinians and stopping the violent attacks against Israel—these must both happen if we are to open up a new space for creative evolution of ideas, views of history, values, and positions. The cycle of vindication and self-justification must end.



Israelis protesting in Tel Aviv carrying signs reading, “In Gaza and Sderot the children want to live.”

liberal Jewish voices in Israel and here in Canada (Jewish Independent Voices) who work to support justice for Palestinians. We encourage Unitarians to participate in dialogue with both Jewish congregations and Palestinian groups in their community. Let us learn to listen to one

7.8. These recommendations in no way take away our obligations as Unitarians and as Canadians to address the very similar injustices which we have perpetrated against First Nations people in Canada. We recommend to CUSJ that we make First Nations justice a top priority in the Unitarian social action agenda, including publishing a discussion paper on this theme in 2014.

END NOTES

1. On 14 May 1948, David Ben-Gurion, the president of the Jewish Agency for Palestine declared the establishment of a Jewish State, the State of Israel, to become independent upon the termination of the British Mandate for Palestine, 15 May, 1948.
2. This is well-documented in the first-hand report by Miko Peled in *The General's Son, Journey of an Israeli in Palestine*, Just World Books, Charlottesville, Virginia, © 2012
3. Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_legislative_election,_2006
4. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/canada-pm-slams-world-leaders-for-not-supporting-israel/>
5. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2012/06/20/pol-cp-mackay-israel.html>
6. <http://www.presstv.com/detail/2013/04/17/298706/israel-again-threatens-to-invade-iran/>
7. Wikipedia: "Three states—India, Israel, and Pakistan—have never signed the treaty. India and Pakistan are confirmed nuclear powers, and Israel has a long-standing policy of deliberate ambiguity (see List of countries with nuclear weapons)."
8. Source: *ICJ and CIMEL paper*, June 1997 by Salman H. Abu-Sitta, <http://prn.mcgill.ca/research/papers/abusitta.htm>
9. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/03/gaza-oil-fields.html> Al Monitor article: *Gaza Gas Can't Help Palestinians*.
10. For links to these statements go to: <http://cusj.org/issues/peace/israel-palestine/>
11. Unitarian Universalist 2010 Statement of Conscience on Creating Peace
12. Ibid
13. The Amman Call, <http://www.currentconcerns.ch/index.php?id=407>)
14. <http://www.ifamericansknew.org/stats/deaths.html>
15. http://www.ifamericansknew.org/about_us/whoweare.html - child casualties
16. Items 7.3.1 to 7.3.3 are part of the Kairos Palestine document.
17. (<http://www.inminds.com/boycott-settlements.html>); (<http://www.bdsmovement.net/activecamps/divestment>)
18. - <http://ijvcanada.org/>

FURTHER RESOURCES

Peled, Miko, *The General's Son, Journey of an Israeli in Palestine*, Just World Books, Charlottesville, Virginia, © 2012 (Available to speak)

Dr Izzeldin Abuelaish *I Shall Not Hate, a Gaza Doctor's Journey*. Dr. Abuselaish now works in Toronto. He is a Palestinian doctor from Gaza whose three daughters and a niece were deliberately killed by Israelis. (available to speak.)

Desmond Tutu: **Justice** requires action to stop subjugation of Palestinians- www.tampabay.com/opinion/columns/justice-requires-action-to-stop-subjugation-of-palestinians/1227722#
<http://www.ifamericansknew.org/stats/deaths.html> (read this thoroughly to understand that the Palestinian death count is suggested to be much higher than indicated).
<http://www.btselem.org/> (statistics on injuries and deaths suffered by both sides in the conflict)
http://www.btselem.org/statistics/detainees_and_prisoners

The Feasibility of the Right of Return

Source: *ICJ and CIMEL paper*, June 1997 by **Salman H. Abu-Sitta**, which received his PhD in Civil Engineering from the University of London. He is the founder and director of a construction and development company which worked for the World Bank, Arab Fund, Kuwait Fund and others in the Middle East and Africa. He writes frequently on the Palestine Question and has been a member of the Palestine National Congress for 20 years. <http://prn.mcgill.ca/research/papers/abusitta.htm>

A History of elections in Palestine – Wikipedia –

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_in_the_Palestinian_National_Authority#2006_Parliamentary_election
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_legislative_election,_2006

United Nations Resolution 194, Section 11 – Refugees

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_General_Assembly_Resolution_194#Article_11.E2.80.94Refugees

FILMS

The Gatekeepers (<http://www.thegatekeepersfilm.com/>) (full length feature) is a superb Israeli documentary (partially funded by the CBC) that is based on interviews with a half-dozen former heads of the Shin Bet, Israel's primary security agency. Speaking frankly about their work, dealing with major incidents during their careers, these highly intelligent, articulate officials shed a revealing light on Israel's policy toward the Palestinians and toward the militant settlers who dominate the right wing of Israeli politics. It is no pretty picture. Captured terrorists are executed out of hand, targeted assassinations go wrong and innocent women and children die, while politicians of all political stripes regularly sacrifice Shin Bet and principle to save their own skins. "These hard men who spent their lives protecting their nation's interests have all come to the conclusion that present Israel policy is fundamentally wrong."

Occupation 101 – Voices of the Silenced Majority (<http://www.occupation101.com/>)

A thought-provoking and powerful documentary film on the current and historical root causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Unlike any other film ever produced on the conflict, Occupation 101 presents a comprehensive analysis of the facts and hidden truths surrounding the never-ending controversy. It dispels many of its long-perceived myths and misconceptions. The film details life under Israeli military rule, the role of the United States in the conflict, and the major obstacles that stand in the way of a lasting and viable peace. The witnesses include leading Middle East scholars, peace activists, journalists, religious leaders and humanitarian workers whose voices have too often been suppressed in American media.

Seven Deadly Myths -- <http://sevendeadlymyths.webs.com/>

Lia Tarachansky documents the journey of an Israeli from settler to Palestinian activist. The movie goes back to the formation of Israel in 1948 and covers both what really happened and the processes in Israel to suppress Israeli dissent. It is projected to come out 2013; the length is unknown.

The Invisible Men -- <http://www.timesofisrael.com/sympathetic-film-unveils-invisible-gay-palestinians/> --

A new documentary showing the lives of gays living in Palestine and Israel, their fears and the dangers they face from Israeli security, their own community, and their own families.

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The CUSJ purposes are:

- to develop and maintain a vibrant network of Unitarian social action in Canada and elsewhere and to proactively represent Unitarian principles and values in matters of social justice and in particular
- to provide opportunities, including through publication of newsletters, for Unitarians and friends to apply their religious, humanistic and spiritual values to social action aimed at the relief of (1) poverty and economic injustice, (2) discrimination based on religious, racial or other grounds, (3) abuses of human rights whether of individuals or peoples, (4) abuses of democratic process, and
- to promote peace and security, environmental protection, education, and literacy in keeping with the spirit of Unitarian values.

These purposes are an integral part of the Constitution of CUSJ, adopted at the CUSJ Annual Meeting in Mississauga, ON, May 19, 1999, and amended at the 2003 AGM.

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