

# INVESTMENT IN PALESTINE: NO SUBSTITUTE FOR DIVESTMENT FROM OPPRESSION



This is not a natural disaster.

This is what a bulldozed home in Palestine looks like.

**Neither charity nor investments are true substitutes for justice.**

*“A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. On the one hand, we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life’s roadside, but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life’s highway.”*

-- Martin Luther King, Jr.

**To develop their economy, Palestinians need access to their land, access to water, and freedom to move workers and goods. The Israeli occupation severely limits all these.**

**Caterpillar** bulldozers demolish Palestinian homes, uproot farm trees, and damage Palestinian roads. **Hewlett-Packard** equipment in the wall and in checkpoints throughout the West Bank limit Palestinian worker mobility, even among Palestinian communities. **Motorola Solutions** surveillance systems protect segregated communities illegally occupying Palestinian land, denying Palestinians access to their farm lands and their sources of water. In fact, the World Bank itself claims the Palestinian economy will remain “stagnant” until Israel lifts its restrictions on land, water, a range of raw materials, and export markets. The World Bank further claims that Israel “still does not allow any Palestinian development in the 60 percent of the West Bank comprising Area C.” In 2009 only 6 building permits were granted to Palestinians in area C; and 7 in 2010. Israel then uses Caterpillar bulldozers to demolish structures built without permits—permits it does not allow Palestinians to have.

**Built today, destroyed tomorrow.**

Israel demolished dozens of Palestinian homes, water cisterns and farm buildings built with European funds in 2011, and over 100 such structures are at risk, according to the the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). According to Oxfam, *“Aid from the international community, including European governments, is wasted when aid-funded projects are demolished.”*

**Ultimately, Palestinians themselves are asking for divestment.**

They are asking the international community to divest from companies that profit from the Israeli occupation. *“We Palestinians don’t want a more beautiful prison to live in. We want the prison walls to come down, and that won’t happen unless pressure is placed on Israel to end the occupation..”*

-- Sam Bahour, Palestinian-American entrepreneur.

# www.RabbisLetter.org

We support church divestment from Israel's occupation

**We, the undersigned Jewish clergy, encourage your efforts to initiate phased selective divestment from corporations which profit from or support Israel's occupation of the West Bank. We applaud your initiative and want to communicate our support as Jewish leaders who also work for justice and peace for the people of Israel and Palestine.**

We are aware that the Jewish Council on Public Affairs (JCPA) has unleashed a powerful campaign to dissuade you, and consequently dissuade the Presbyterian Church (USA) from moving forward with its well-considered divestment campaign.

As Jewish leaders, we believe the JCPA's stance against church divestment does not represent the broader consensus of the American Jewish community. There is in fact a growing desire within the North American Jewish community to end our silence over Israel's oppressive occupation of Palestine. Every day Jewish leaders – we among them – are stepping forward to express outrage over the confiscation of Palestinian land, destruction of farms and groves and homes, the choking of the Palestinian economy and daily harassment and violence against Palestinian people. Members of the Jewish community are increasingly voicing their support for nonviolent popular resistance against these outrages – including the kind of cautious, highly-specified divestment such as the Presbyterian Church (USA) is preparing to undertake.

However, even if the American Jewish community were unanimously opposed to such phased selective divestment by your Church – which is not at all the case – we believe it is still important that you move forward with the thoughtful multi-year process which your Church has begun. Your Church has long been active in pursuing justice and peace by nonviolent means, including divestment, in many places around the world. As Christians, you have your own particular stake in the land to which both our traditions have long attachments of faith and history. We particularly acknowledge the oppression of Palestinian Christians under Israeli occupation and the justice of your efforts to relieve the oppression directed against your fellows.

**To advocate for an end to an unjust policy is not anti-Semitic. To criticize Israel is not anti-Semitic.** To invest your own resources in corporations which pursue your vision of a just and peaceful world, and to withdraw your resources from those which contradict this vision, is not anti-Semitic. There is a terrible history of actual anti-Semitism perpetrated by Christians at different times throughout the millennia and conscientious Christians today do bear a burden of conscience on that account. We can understand that, with your commitment to paths of peace and justice, it must be terribly painful and inhibiting to be accused of anti-Semitism.

In fact, many of us in the Jewish community recognize that the continuing occupation of Palestine itself presents a great danger to the safety of the Jewish people, not to mention oppressing our spirits and diminishing our honor in the world community. **We appreciate the solidarity of people of conscience in pursuing conscientious nonviolent strategies, such as phased selective divestment, to end the occupation.**

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