

DECLARATION FOR AN END TO GENOCIDE IN PALESTINE

A Resolution of Witness

TEXT OF THE MOTION

WHEREAS international bodies and agencies including the UN General Assembly,¹ The International Criminal Court,² Genocide Watch,³ Amnesty International⁴ and Human Rights Watch⁵ have each conducted investigations within the past 18 months and concluded that the actions of the State of Israel in Palestine constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide; and

WHEREAS more than 200 journalists and media workers have been killed in targeted attacks by the Israeli Defense Force making it the deadliest ever conflict for journalists⁶; and

WHEREAS medical providers in Gaza⁷ have reported that there is a pattern of children having been killed by single gunshot wounds to the head or torso indicating targeted killing, medical aid and supplies have been blocked from entering Gaza by the Israeli military, over 1,000 medical workers have been killed by Israeli forces,⁸ and hospitals have been targeted by the Israeli Defense Force⁹; and

WHEREAS as of March 22, 2025, *at least* 50,523 Palestinians in Gaza and 905 Palestinians in the West Bank have directly been killed by the Israeli Defense Forces since October 7, 2023, of which an estimated 15,781 were children¹⁰; and

WHEREAS between October 7, 2023, and September 30, 2024, an estimated 67,413+ Palestinians in Gaza were killed indirectly by starvation, lack of access to medical care, and water contamination¹¹; and

WHEREAS since March 2, 2025, the State of Israel, has blocked aid supplies including food, fuel, water, and medicine from entering Gaza, and the Israeli defense minister, Israel Katz, said, “Israel’s policy is clear: no humanitarian aid will enter Gaza”¹²; and

WHEREAS on March 18, 2025, the State of Israel resumed airstrikes on Gaza ending the ceasefire agreement¹³ a mere two months after the ceasefire was agreed to¹⁴; and

WHEREAS the U.S. federal government has used tax-funded dollars to give the State of Israel approximately \$34 billion in military weapons, arms, and other financial support between October 2023 and March 2025, at least 69% of Israel’s arms imports come from the US, and US made military vehicles and weapons have been identified as being used to conduct acts of genocide¹⁵; and

39 **WHEREAS** the U.S. Government has violated the federal Leahy Law which prohibits the U.S.
40 Government, “from using funds for assistance to units of foreign security forces where there is
41 credible information implicating that unit in the commission of gross violations of human rights
42 (GVHR).”¹⁶; and

44 **WHEREAS** the U.S. government has disregarded the International Criminal Court’s arrest
45 warrants¹⁷ for Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and
46 instead welcomed Netanyahu as a guest to the White House¹⁸ and Congress¹⁹; and

48 **WHEREAS** U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu have plans
49 underway to relocate Palestinians in Gaza to other countries, permanently displacing them, and
50 taking their homeland to use as a real estate project²⁰; and

52 **WHEREAS** the right to free speech as protected by the U.S. Constitution has been violated by
53 arrests, imprisonment, deportation, and violent attacks by law enforcement on Pro-Palestinian
54 activists²¹; and

56 **WHEREAS** the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a Declaration
57 for Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel²² in 2021, following a tradition of decades of support
58 and advocacy for healing and restitution, and a condemnation of violence;

60 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod of the United Church of
61 Christ adopts the following declaration:

- 63 1. We *affirm* that all are made in God’s image and are deserving of life free from
64 oppression, persecution, and violence.
- 66 2. We *denounce* all acts of the U.S. Government and the State of Israel that contribute to
67 a continuation of the genocide of the Palestinian people.
- 69 3. We *affirm* that the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people perpetrated by the State
70 of Israel and supported by the U.S. is a humanitarian crisis that calls for immediate
71 action.
- 73 4. We *reject* any theology or ideology including Christian Zionism, Supercessionism,
74 antisemitism, anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian, or anti-Islam bias that would privilege or
75 exclude any one nation, race, culture or religion within God’s universal economy of
76 grace²³.
- 78 5. We *affirm* the obligation of the U.S. to recognize international law, immediately cease
79 all sales and transfers of military arms and financial support to the State of Israel, and
80 use all legal and diplomatic tools to help bring about a permanent peace which
81 includes: protection of the rights of Palestinians to live in their homeland free from
82 violence, to uphold their human rights, to be released from military occupation, the
83 rights of refugees to return to their homes, and their right to self-determination.

85 6. *We affirm* the obligation of the State of Israel to immediately end the attacks on
86 Palestinians, end military occupation, and to expedite critical aid to enter Gaza, and
87 pay restitution to the Palestinian people.
88

89 7. *We reject* the idea that any criticism of policies of the State of Israel is inherently
90 antisemitic, and we oppose the efforts of U.S. federal and state governments to limit
91 free speech.
92

93 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that all settings of the United Church of Christ be encouraged to
94 receive this Resolution as a prophetic call and commit to:
95

96 1. Stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and to denounce the ongoing genocide
97 whether that be through the context of public witness, legislative advocacy, legal
98 action, or non-violent direct action.
99

100 2. Call on our government to cease providing financial sponsorship, military arms, and
101 political cover to the State of Israel for acts of genocide.
102

103 3. Denounce hate and violence in all its forms including that rooted in Islamophobia,
104 anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab bias, and antisemitism, as contrary to the teachings of
105 Jesus and the love of God for all humanity.
106

107 4. Share this declaration, pray, and speak within our congregations and communities
108 about the genocide in Palestine.
109

110 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod of the United Church of
111 Christ encourages the National Setting, Conferences, Associations, and the Local Church to
112 increase capacity and resources to support and advocate for an immediate end to the genocide of
113 the Palestinian people.
114

115 **FUNDING:** The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance
116 with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.
117

118 **IMPLEMENTATION:** The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or
119 other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

¹ “Genocide as colonial erasure - Report of Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967” <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/genocide-as-colonialerasure-report-francesca-albanese-01oct24/>. Accessed 22 April 2025.

² “Situation in the State of Palestine: ICC Pre-Trial Chamber I rejects the State of Israel's challenges to jurisdiction and issues warrants of arrest for Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant.” | *International Criminal Court*, 21 November 2024, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-state-palestine-icc-pre-trial-chamber-i-rejects-state-israels-challenges>. Accessed 22 April 2025.

³ Condon, Grace, and Frankie Condon. “Genocide is Never Justifiable: Israel and Hamas in Gaza.” *Genocide Watch*, 20 February 2024, <https://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/genocide-is-never-justifiable-israel-and-hamas-in-gaza>.

Accessed 22 April 2025.

⁴ “Amnesty concludes Israel is committing genocide in Gaza.” *Amnesty International*, 5 December 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/amnesty-international-concludes-israel-is-committing-genocideagainst-palestinians-in-gaza/>. Accessed 22 April 2025.

⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/12/19/extermination-and-acts-genocide/israel-deliberately-depriving-palestiniansgaza>

⁶ “Targeted, killed, burned alive: Journalists in Gaza attacked by Israel.” *Al Jazeera*, 7 April 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/4/7/targeted--burned-alivejournalists-in-gaza-attacked-by-israel>.

⁷ Sidhwa, Feroze, et al. “Opinion | What Doctors and Health Care Workers in Gaza Saw.” *The New York Times*, 9 October 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/09/opinion/gaza-doctor-interviews.html>, accessed 22 April 2025, and The Chris Hedges Youtube Channel. *Israel’s Eradication of Gaza’s Healthcare System* (w/ Dr. Feroze Sidhwa). 23 April 2025. *youtube*, <https://youtu.be/lp9lEnYa4q0?si=csooUpRy6WLeifJk>. video.

⁸ Doctors Without Borders. “Gaza crisis: MSF response to the Israel-Gaza war.” *Doctors Without Borders*, 24 April 2025, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/our-response-israel-gaza-war>. Accessed 24 April 2025, and Doctors Without Borders. “Remembering our colleagues killed in Gaza.” *Doctors Without Borders*, 21 March 2025, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/remembering-our-colleagues-killed-gaza>. Accessed 24 April 2025.

⁹ “Timeline: Israel’s attacks on hospitals throughout its war on Gaza.” *Al Jazeera*, 13 April 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/13/timeline-israels-attacks-on-hospitals-throughout-its-war-on-gaza>.

¹⁰ Kiyada, Sudev, et al. “The lives lost in Gaza: A closer look at those killed in the conflict so far.” *Reuters*, 1 March 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/graphics/ISRAEL-PALESTINIANS/FATALITIES/byvrxlqeqve/>. Accessed 22 April 2025; and Al-Mughrabi, Nidal, and Emma Farge. “Gaza death toll: how many Palestinians has Israel’s offensive killed?” *Reuters*, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/how-many-palestinians-has-israels-gaza-offensive-killed2025-01-15/>. Accessed 22 April 2025; and “Israel-Gaza war in maps and charts: Live tracker.” *Al Jazeera*, 9 October 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>. Accessed 22 April 2025. ^{xxi} Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs. “The Human Toll: Indirect Deaths from War in Gaza and the West Bank, October 7, 2023 Forward.” *Cost of War*, 7 October 2024

¹¹ https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2023/2024/Costs%20of%20War_Human%20Toll%20Since%20Oct%207.pdf.

¹² Ellis, Hannah. “No plans to allow any aid into Gaza, says Israeli minister.” *The Guardian*, 16 April 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/16/no-humanitarian-aid-gaza-israeli-minister-israel-katz-hamas>

¹³ The Guardian. “Israel strikes that shattered ceasefire ‘just the beginning’, Netanyahu says, after deadliest 24 hours in Gaza since 2023 – as it happened.” *The Guardian*, 18 March 2025,

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2025/mar/18/israel-gaza-live-blog-updates-air-strikes-strip-netanyahuhamas>

¹⁴ Wikipedia. “2025 Gaza war ceasefire.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_Gaza_war_ceasefire. Accessed 24 April 2025

¹⁵ “US plans emergency Israel arms deals worth nearly \$3 billion.” *VOA*, 28 February 2025, <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-plans-emergency-israel-arms-deals-worth-nearly-3-billion/7993398.html>. Accessed 22 April 2025; and Reuters. “Rubio expedites delivery of \$4 billion in military aid to Israel.” *VOA news*, 2 march 2025, <https://www.voanews.com/a/rubio-expedites-delivery-of-4-billion-in-military-aid-to-israel-/7994060.html>. Accessed 22 April 2025; and Watson Institute for International & Public Affairs, Brown University,. “United States Spending on Israel’s Military Operations and Related U.S. Operations in the Region, October 7, 2023-September 30, 2024 | Costs of War.” *Costs of War*, 7 October 2024,

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<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/which-us-made-weaponry-does-israel-whichstands-accused-of-genocide-use-in-gaza/3241486>.

¹⁶ “Leahy Law Fact Sheet - United States Department of State.” *State Department*, 20 January 2025, <https://www.state.gov/bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/releases/2025/01/leahy-law-fact-sheet>

¹⁷ Al Lawati, Abbas, et al. “International Criminal Court issues arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister.” *CNN*, 22 November 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/11/21/middleeast/international-criminal-court-issues-arrest-warrant-forisraeli-prime-minister-intl/index.html>

¹⁸ Wilson, Caitlin, and Emily Atkinson. “Netanyahu meets US lawmakers as Trump sanctions International Criminal Court - follow live.” *BBC*, 6 February 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/live/cvg4zwwez9et>

¹⁹ Knickmeyer, Ellen, et al. “In fiery speech to Congress, Netanyahu vows ‘total victory’ in Gaza and denounces US protesters.” *AP*, 24 July 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/netanyahu-congress-gaza-hamas-israel-6ea5daf3cd1988b0ad6e874bd450f9bf>

²⁰ “AP report: U.S. and Israel look to Africa for permanent relocation of Palestinians from Gaza.” *PBS*, 14 March 2025, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/ap-report-u-s-and-israel-look-to-africa-for-permanent-relocation-of-palestinians-from-gaza>; and “Israel building agency to steer Palestinian 'voluntary departure' from Gaza.” *Al Jazeera*, 24 March 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/24/israel-building-agency-to-steer-palestinian-voluntary-departure-from-gaza>

²¹ “US detains Palestinian activist Mohsen Mahdawi at citizenship interview.” *Al Jazeera*, 15 April 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/15/palestinian-student-arrested-at-us-citizenship-interview-over-gazaprotests>; and “Judge allows Columbia graduate Mahmoud Khalil's deportation.” *BBC*, 11 April 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cwy0ngd11yzo>; and “Pro-Palestinian demonstrators who occupied Stanford building are charged with felonies.” *AP News*, 10 April 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/propalestinian-stanford-protesters-arrests-charges-88b82d95fd56dfd16f97c0a576f7cd86>; and “A look at the people ensnared in Trump's campaign against pro-Palestinian activism at US colleges.” *AP News*, 1 April 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/immigration-detainees-students-ozturk-khalil-78f544fb2c8b593c88a0c1f0e0ad9c5f>

²² Shalom United Church of Christ, New Haven, Connecticut. “DECLARATION FOR A JUST PEACE BETWEEN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL.” *General Synod*, 2021, <https://www.palestineportal.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/UCC-General-Synod-2021-Resolution-I-P.pdf>

²³ This is taken from Declaration For A Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel resolution passed at the 33rd General Synod in 2021.