PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO TAKE ACTIONS TOWARD A NON-VIOLENT RESOLUTION OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Background

The modern State of Israel is a political rather than a theological entity. As such, Israel’s responsibilities toward its citizens and neighbors are duties defined by international law and its own claims to democratic principles. During nearly twenty years of partition and an ensuing half-century of occupation, those duties have been ignored and those principles mocked by a pattern of behavior designed to privilege Israel at the expense of its Arab and Palestinian citizens and neighbors.

Palestinians in the West Bank have lived since 1967 under Israeli military occupation that subjects them to many human rights abuses, including: loss of their land for the purpose of building Israeli settlements; limited access to their land and to each other on account of the route of the Separation Wall on occupied Palestinian territories; systematic displacement into small, non-contiguous geographic enclaves separated by barriers and checkpoints; gross inequality in the amount of water allocated to them; severe and arbitrary travel restrictions; limited access to holy sites; segregated roads; demolition of their homes; destruction of their crops by settlers and the Israeli army; and arbitrary arrest, even of children.

The Israeli government continues to subject Palestinians in Gaza to military attacks using deadly force beyond that necessary for Israel’s acknowledged need for self-defense, resulting in thousands of thousands of non-combatant Palestinians including women and children; has destroyed Gaza’s infrastructure and economy; and the sea blockade of Gaza has imposed severe limits on personal entry and on the entry of products essential to Gazans’ well-being.

Israel continues to appropriate Palestinian properties for Jewish settlements and continues to deny building permits to Palestinians, as well as to revoke the residency rights of many of its Palestinian citizens there.

Israel refuses to end, but rather has sought to solidify, its occupation of territory taken in the 1967 War, leading to numerous illegal actions and human rights abuses by the Israeli government and military in defiance of United Nations resolutions, the Geneva Convention and the International Court of Justice.
1. Whereas the City of Grand Rapids, via its City Commission has clearly established that it does not condone, encourage, or support racism or discrimination based on national origin, race, ethnicity, or religion, and;

2. Whereas the people of the City of Grand Rapids would not encourage, condone, or support discrimination on the basis of national origin, race, ethnicity, or religion, but would seek the elimination of such anywhere it might be practiced, and;

3. Whereas the State of Israel has, and continues, its systematic discrimination against Palestinians, singly and collectively, on the basis of their national origin, ethnicity, race, and religion, including through various de jure and de facto laws and practices, including its law of return, which prevents Palestinians refugees from returning to their homes solely because they are not Jewish, and;

4. Whereas the military occupation and colonization of those parts of historic Palestine seized in 1967 continues unabated to this day in violation of international law and has resulted in the ongoing dispossession, ethnic cleansing, and repression of Palestinians, including but not limited to the establishment of an apartheid system of population control, theft of Palestinian land, the demolition of homes, bombing campaigns against civilian targets, and the killing of over 2,000 children since the year 2000, and

5. Whereas the City of Grand Rapids has demonstrated its understanding that we are citizens of the world and that there are times when actions of governments show such complete disregard for human rights and human life that we are compelled to join a world-wide movement that seeks a non-violent solution, just as the City of Grand Rapids did in divesting city funds from corporations doing business with the Apartheid South African Government in 1982, and;

6. Whereas the City of Grand Rapids has recognized that the investment of city funds “should not be made on an arbitrary basis,” but should be based on the premise “that the people’s money should be used for the people’s benefit…” (City of Grand Rapids Investment Policy, and
7. Whereas there is a large and growing world-wide movement to use economic power as the best hope for a non-violent resolution to the Israeli policy of occupation and practice of apartheid. This movement has been joined by municipalities including Portland, OR, and Leicester, England, religious organizations including the United Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church, USA, Jewish organizations inside and outside of Israel, including Jewish Voices for Peace, (USA) and Boycott from Within (Israel) and,

8. Whereas a coalition of concerned local individuals and organizations headed by Healing Children of Conflict, including Grand Rapids citizens of Palestinian origin who themselves or their families have been directly impacted by the Israeli Government policy of occupation and apartheid practice, the Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ and several Grand Rapids congregations, along with other citizens who do not want to see our local tax dollars supporting such policies and practices that result in egregious human casualty, injustice, and support of a cycle of violence, and

9. Whereas the following four companies are particularly implicated in profiteering from, and supporting the Israeli Government's illegal occupation of Palestinian lands:

- Caterpillar which sells specially manufactured bulldozers (D9 bulldozers) to the Israeli military, equipped with armor and weapons used to demolish Palestinian homes, entire villages, and agricultural land.

- G4S, a global private security firm that provides security services and equipment in prisons where Palestinians are jailed and often tortured. Since the year 2000, Defense of Children International reports that over 8,000 Palestinian Children have been held in Israeli jails.

- Hewlett-Packard which provides identification systems that differentiate by religion and ethnicity between Palestinians and Jewish Israelis, thereby assisting in the systematic discrimination against the former, who are restricted in movement by their ID’s often preventing them from working, going to school, or seeing family members.

- Motorola Solutions which provides communication systems to the Israeli military and electronic surveillance systems to the Israeli settlements that are
illegally built on Palestinian land and whose residents often harass and attack Palestinians in neighboring villages and towns.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that,

1. The City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, divest itself and/or make no further business dealings or purchases from four companies due to their serious human rights violations in the ongoing illegal Israeli Occupation of Palestinian Lands until those companies have ceased their complicit activities or the Israeli Government has ceased its policy of occupation and practice of apartheid. The four companies are: Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, G4S, and Motorola Solutions.

2. Denounces the use of violence as a means to resolving the conflict between the Palestinian people and the state of Israel,

3. Recognizes that the Jewish people and Judaism are not synonymous with the government of Israel or its policies.