

No Way to Treat a Child: Protecting the Human Rights of Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation

Preamble: Israel operates two separate legal systems in the same territory—civilian courts for Israeli settlers and separate military courts for Palestinians that lack internationally accepted fair trial rights and protections. An estimated 500-700 Palestinian children are detained and prosecuted in military courts each year. After 50 years of Israeli military occupation the situation for children living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip) continues to deteriorate, making children increasingly vulnerable.

Whereas the ELCA, in 2005, established an initiative, “Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land,” which seeks “peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis and the continuation of the Christian witness in the Holy Land;” and

Whereas the ELCA, in its Social Statement “For Peace in God’s World” has committed to promote respect for human rights, especially for “groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children;” and

Whereas the ELCA is in a relationship of accompaniment with the six Palestinian Lutheran congregations (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land); and

Whereas the ELCA Peace Not Walls initiative issued an Action Alert in December 2017, supporting HR 4391, Promoting Human Rights by Ending Israeli Military Detention of Palestinian Children Act; therefore be it

Resolved that the Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly urge the U.S. Congress to call on the State of Israel to guarantee basic due process rights in the Israeli military court system; ensure the absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international law; ensure that operations are carried out in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and call on the United States to fully enforce its own established law, including the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act; and be it further

Resolved that the Assembly ask the Bishop and his advocacy staff to advocate with elected officials, encouraging them to ensure that United States taxpayer funds do not support ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law; and be it further

Resolved that congregations of the Rocky Mountain Synod be encouraged to learn more about the experiences of Palestinian children held in the Israeli military courts and the lives of children in Palestinian Lutheran congregations; and be it further

Resolved that members of the Rocky Mountain Synod be encouraged to contact their members of Congress to support legislation that prohibits U.S. foreign aid to be used to violate the rights of Palestinian children, including H.R. 4391, 115th Congress, which requires the Secretary of State to certify that United States funds do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse, or ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law.