

Making US Aid to State of Israel Contingent on Halt to Settlement Construction

WHEREAS the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in assembly in 2005 adopted “Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine,” to build “a movement that will strengthen the resolve of political leaders to find a peaceful and just solution in the Holy Land” (I.A)¹, by way of a “cessation of all settlement activities;” (II.B.1.b) and

WHEREAS the United Nations has determined that Israeli settlements are illegal under international law because they violate Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the transfer of the occupying power’s civilian population into occupied territory;² and

WHEREAS peace groups in Israel and the U.S.—such as the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, B’Tselem Israeli Information Center for Human Rights, Jewish Voice for Peace and Peace Now—assert that settlement construction is an obstacle to peace³; and

WHEREAS Israel continues to build more settlements on Palestinian land, with Israeli Housing Minister Uri Ariel estimating more than 700,000 settlers in the West Bank in March, 2015 (Jerusalem Post, March 3, 2015,⁴), living in more than 125 Israeli-approved settlements and additional 100 “settlement outposts”⁵ therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in Assembly, urges the Congress of the United States to make future U.S. aid to Israel contingent on Israel’s halt to all settlement-building in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem); and be it further

RESOLVED that members of our synod’s congregations, be encouraged to contact their Congressional Representatives and Senators, asking them to apply this condition to future U.S. aid to Israel. The Peace Not Walls working group in the Rocky Mountain Synod will provide information and resources for this advocacy on the synod website: www.rmselfca.org/world/peace_not_walls.

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Representing Peace Not Walls, Rocky Mountain Synod

Signers: Kaitlyn Baldrige, Pastor Bonita Bock, Pastor Ted Fritschel, Frank Gunn, Barbara Hanst, Melanie Ferraro, Jan Miller, Ann Rutkofsky, Dorothy Stenman, Doug Wheeler, Jo Ann Wacker-Farrand, Natalie Walter

¹ Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine:

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/PNW_Strategy.pdf

² Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 49: <https://www.icrc.org/ihl/WebART/380-600056>

³ B’Tselem, The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights:

<http://www.btselem.org/topic/settlements>

⁴ Jerusalem Post, March 3, 2015: <http://www.jpost.com/National-News/Housing-minister-sees-50-percent-more-settlers-in-West-Bank-by-2019-352501>

⁵ B’Tselem: <http://www.btselem.org/settlements/statistics>