

Reorientation and Commitment

January 2026



It is now almost a decade since Mennonite Church Canada passed its 2016 resolution on Palestine and Israel. The resolution was a response to the 2009 “Moment of Truth” call from Palestinian Christians to stand with them for a just peace in the Holy Land, following various engagements with Bethlehem Bible College in the preceding years. The resolution has since grounded the work of the MC Canada Palestine Israel Network (PIN)—a national network, commissioned by the church, composed of volunteer working groups and individuals in all five regions of the church.

Since October 2023, the PIN’s advocacy work has become even more urgent. Israel’s ongoing genocidal actions in Gaza, its deliberate thwarting of humanitarian aid; its sharply increased campaigns of settlement building, forced displacement, and human rights violations in the West Bank and East Jerusalem—all have put enormous strain on our Palestinian siblings in faith, and the people of Palestine more generally.

On November 14, 2025, Kairos Palestine issued a new statement, “A Moment of Truth—Faith in a Time of Genocide,” calling both the Palestinian churches and the global church to greater clarity and urgent action. The following declaration is our response, as MC Canada PIN, to the Kairos Palestine call. We want it to be a primary guide in our work, but also a call to our congregations and leaders to adopt it as part of their mission. It is offered in three sections:

- A. Looking back: PIN’s achievements, lessons, and challenges since 2016
- B. The Kairos Palestine call of 2025
- C. Our commitment to action beyond 2025

A. LOOKING BACK: OUR FORMATION, ACHIEVEMENTS, LESSONS, AND CHALLENGES SINCE 2016

1. Our formation and mandate

In the wake of the resolution of July 2016, MC Canada leadership asked the authors of the resolution to form a group to guide the church in implementing the resolution. The result was the Palestine-Israel Network, made up of chosen representatives in area churches, functioning under the oversight of International Witness, the global ministry arm of the church. In the months following, when MC Canada restructured to prioritize regional church structures, we followed suit by establishing five regional PIN groupings, whose chairs would form the national steering group. These groups vary in size and reach among the regions, some meeting regularly as geography

allows, and others in a more dispersed way, each with their local networking and events—but all centred around our mandate, which is the set of “be it resolved” clauses of the resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED:

- We look to the gospel of Jesus Christ for guidance and grace in our responses to the Palestine and Israel context;
- We commit ourselves to ongoing prayer, searching, and discernment concerning the ways in which we as congregations, communities, and church members are impeding or facilitating, ignoring or promoting, the quest for a just peace between Palestinians and Israelis;
- We affirm the efforts of Israelis and Palestinians who are committed to non-violent ways of overcoming the injustice in their region; we commit ourselves to working in partnership with them and with Canadian Jewish and Palestinian communities;
- We urge our member congregations to deepen their understanding of the Palestine-Israel relationship through the study of educational materials on the topic and through participation in learning tours to the region;
- We ask the Mennonite Church Canada General Board, regional churches, congregations, and members to avoid investing in or supporting companies that do business with Israeli settlements and the Israel Defense Forces, and companies that are profiting from the occupation of the Palestinian territories; and
- We encourage the government of Canada to support measures that put pressure on Israel (including through economic sanctions) to end the occupation and work for a just peace, in accordance with international law.

2. What we have achieved since 2016

Throughout our decade of response, we have taken our cues from Palestinian Christian leaders at Bethlehem Bible College and other organizations. They have encouraged us to challenge the ideology of Christian Zionism, which was and continues to harm Palestinians, and they have urged us to engage in both political advocacy, prayer, and visits to the Holy Land. And so, since 2016, we have:

- developed and promoted an FAQ document and teaching Participated in a podcast aired by the MC Canada communications office
- formalized a partnership between MC Canada and Bethlehem Bible College, enabling financial support to flow through International Witness, and the mounting of a speaking tour of BethBC teaching staff in Manitoba in 2022
- promoted and used the resources of Mennonite Central Committee’s five-year Cry for Home campaign (2017 to 2022), which was also focused on a just peace in Palestine;

- in collaboration with MCC, developed the Palestinian Land Exercise, an interactive group experience based on Kairos Canada's blanket exercise, as a way to educate on the dispossession of Palestinians from their land; the exercise was updated in 2025 to reflect the realities post October 7, 2023;
- amplified Palestinian voices through webinars, a speaking tour of Bethlehem Bible College staff to Manitoba + in 2022, and the monthly *Update* newsletters;
- preached and led adult education sessions in numerous churches;
- developed prayer requests, bulletin inserts and an Advent resource or use in congregations;
- expressed our concerns to MPs and provincial government representatives, either in person, online, or in letters and petitions generated by ourselves or by our advocacy partners, focusing on Canada's obligations to: uphold international law ; press Israel to honour human rights in all the Palestinian territories, end the military occupation, and grant self-determination to Palestinian; stop two-way Canadian arms trade with Israel; and press for a permanent ceasefire and end to blockade in Gaza;
- attended public demonstrations in support of Palestinians on Nakba Day, International Solidarity Days, and in protest of Canadian and international silent complicity or active support of Israel, especially after October 7, 2023;
- led workshops and staffed information booths at regional and national church gatherings;
- collaborated with other justice organizations, both local and national, ecumenical and secular, Palestinian and Jewish-- in standing for a just peace in the Holy Land. Several PIN members sit on national boards and steering committees of partner organizations, including Canadian Friends of Sabeel, Palestine Advocacy Network, and the ecumenical "Call to Repentance" conference;
- participated in several solidarity tours, volunteer stints, conference and visits in Palestine, through various programs of Mennonite Central Committee, Sabeel Liberation Theology Centre, and Bethlehem Bible College;
- welcomed and collaborated with Mennonite Action, a grassroots movement emerging from the US and Ontario in the wake of October 7, 2023. The collaborations have included workshops on antisemitism and islamophobia, and public vigils and/or protests.

3. Challenges and opportunities we have faced

The following are not exhaustive, but they are the most significant factors in clarifying and sharpening our vision and feeding into our resonance with the Kairos Palestine II document.

- a. Reactions from supporters of Israel.** At the national assembly of 2016, on the same day the resolution was to be passed, the governing board of MC Canada received messages from the Center for Israeli and Jewish Affairs, and from a BC member of parliament, asking that the resolution on Palestine and Israel be dropped. The resolution presenters, Byron Rempel-Burkholder and Palmer Becker, were not ready to do so, having already processed the resolution with others with long experience in Palestine, and also wanting the delegates to make their own judgment through their votes. The resolution passed handily. But in the

days following, Rempel-Burkholder and Becker received several hateful emails from obscure sources.

Such overt opposition soon dropped off, and to our surprise and relief, very little reaction of a similar nature emerged from our MC Canada churches. Still, in our work we are keenly aware of the chill that defenders of the Israeli occupation of Palestine—both Jewish and Christian Zionists—wish to impose on people who work for Palestinian dignity and freedom. As we have joined Jewish, Palestinian and other sympathetic peace activists in street rallies and other events, we have observed and sometimes experienced harassment from people voicing anti-Palestinian slurs or accusations of terrorism or antisemitism. Since October 7, 2023, attempts to dialogue with respected Jewish apologists for Israel—once cordial despite disagreements—have been rebuffed.

b. Dealing with structures and limitations of our church

Our church constituency has been mostly respectful, curious, and receptive to the advocacy and education we have done. Church bulletins and area church communiques have carried our prayer requests and calls to action. Most churches we have approached have willingly hosted events we have planned, often in collaboration with other advocacy groups. Our regional PIN groups have attracted a good number of dedicated supporters who come to meetings and rallies, and with whom we collaborate in our efforts. Several within the PIN have been invited into pulpits. Our *Update* mailing list has grown to almost 500 people. For all of this we have been deeply grateful.

On the other hand, we sometimes struggle in knowing whether, in our commitment to respectful and loving interactions, our advocacy has been too muted, or too accommodating, thus dulling the radical solidarity we wish to express with the Palestinian people. The Gaza genocide and the recent Kairos Palestine “Moment of Truth” call have emboldened us (see section C below) to do more as we enter our second decade. Still, given the gravity of the situation, we wish there could be even more of a groundswell of support.

The vision of Kairos Palestine is that the global church and its leaders unite in showing robust and concrete solidarity with the Palestinian churches beyond prayers and general statements about peace and reconciliation. And yet, while Palestinian Christians express gratitude for the efforts of faith-based activist groups, Kairos Palestine nevertheless notes the sense of isolation and abandonment that the diminishing Christian minority in Palestine experiences as their oppression deepens—hence the “Moment of Truth” call.

Under the denominational structures set up in 2017, grassroots resolutions that are discussed and adopted at national assemblies are effectively a thing of the past. Any denominational positioning on social or political issues must come through consensus-building from regional churches. Apart from expressions and gestures of support for the PIN (for which we are very grateful), a united and bold denominational stance on the latest escalation of Israel’s attacks on Palestinian freedom and self-determination has therefore

not been achieved. While we acknowledge the reasons for this (the structural limitations, not to mention the diversity of opinions on the appropriateness of churches taking a political stance or voicing solidarity) this has been frustrating for the PIN steering group.

Confronting antisemitism.

For several years following our resolution—but not directly related to it--there was considerable discussion in Mennonite academic circles about growing historical research into Mennonite complicity and even participation in the Nazi genocide of European Jews. It underscored how our Mennonite community has been tainted historically with racist and antisemitic attitudes and actions, which in some quarters survive into our present.

The question for us, then, was whether these facts should disqualify us from advocating for Palestinians living under the “Jewish state” of Israel. We were convinced that this research effectively inhibited many in MC Canada from taking active part in Palestinian advocacy or in criticizing Israel.

Our resolve, however, has been strengthened by at least two factors:

1. Our Jewish advocacy partners (Independent Jewish Voices, United Jewish People’s Order), along with Jewish academics, writers, and theologians, have provided excellent resources that analyze the difference between criticism of the state of Israel, and genuine antisemitism, the latter which they recognize as toxic and still alive in our communities. In particular, they have campaigned against the definition of antisemitism put forward by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which associates criticism of Israel with antisemitism. Leading Jewish academics around the world have offered an alternative definition in their “Jerusalem Declaration” which likewise affirms the battle against true antisemitism while allowing free speech holding Israel to account to standards of morality and international law.
2. Biblical scholars and theologians from Palestine and from North American seminaries and schools (including PIN member Dan Epp-Tiessen) have helped us in confronting antisemitism while also sharpening our commitment to biblical calls to peacemaking and political action on behalf of Palestinians.

B. THE KAIROS PALESTINE CALL OF 2025

The eruption of Israel’s destruction of Gaza sparked a significant plunge in Palestinian hopes for a just and nonviolent path to peace in the Holy Land. Palestinian Christians, already wounded by the years of tepid response of their siblings in faith to their suffering, were shocked and disheartened to see western churches either expressing support for Israel’s destructive campaign, or remaining silent or hesitant to condemn what the International Court of Justice would, by early 2024, label “a plausible genocide.”

At the end of October 2023, Christian leaders issued a “call to repentance” to the western church, along with a challenge to understand the context of what led to Hamas’s actions,

namely decades of occupation and 16 years of a crippling blockade. Christmas celebrations that year were muted in Palestine, and Bethlehem pastor Munther Isaac's "Christ in the rubble" sermon went viral, as did his creche scene of Baby Jesus lying in a pile of broken concrete. As the killing and destruction continued, books and blogs poured out of the Palestinian community in Palestine and in the diaspora, on the complicity and silence of the global community as Gaza was being destroyed in real time.

In the Christian community, this messaging culminated in the release of a the "Moment of Truth—Faith in a Time of Genocide" on November 14, 2025—an even clearer, more anguished, and more broadly owned statement than the 2009 statement. Endorsed by a broad spectrum of Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant and evangelical Palestinian leaders, the statement was addressed both to Palestinian church communities and to the international church. It included a stark statement of situation, messages of rebuke and instruction, and clear calls to action.

The entire 14-page statement can be accessed online [here](#) (scroll down to the English text). A summary of the text was issued in Kairos Palestine's Christmas appeal ([here](#)). The statement includes four parts:

I: The Reality: Geocide, Colonization, and Ethnic Cleansing: a stark summary of the reality in Palestine after two years of Israel's assault on Gaza after decades of structural injustice.

II: A Moment of Truth for Us. An invitation from Palestinian church leaders to their own people to remain firm in faith, to engage in creative nonviolent resistance to their colonization, and to maintain a Christian presence and witness in the Holy Land.

III: A Call to Repentance and Action. A call to Christians around the world to renew their commitment to their own identity, faith, and call to join God in siding with the oppressed and downtrodden. This means recognizing, naming, and actively working against the sins of genocide, ethnic cleansing, apartheid, colonialism, ethnic supremacy and racism (including antisemitism). It also means uniting with other Christians and with people outside the Christian community who are engaging in creative nonviolent resistance to structures of oppression.

IV. Faith in a Time of Genocide. A statement of renewed faith grounded in the gospel assertions of Incarnation, the Cross, and the Resurrection. Such faith, expressed in costly and steadfast solidarity, constitutes a determined hope.

C. OUR COMMITMENTS TO ACTION IN 2026 AND BEYOND

The following action points express the commitments of MC Canada PIN as it approaches its 10th year. These commitments flow directly from our reflection on the Kairos II call. They both clarify and extend the six original purls of the 2016 MC Canada resolution on Palestine and Israel. Our vision is that our churches and our leaders will adopt these commitments

as their own as well, so that Mennonite Church Canada is known and recognized for its bold witness to a gospel vision of peace based on justice in the Holy Land.

- **Our theological stance and commitment.** We will ground what we do in the gospel and in Scripture. We will promote and reflect a theology of land as belonging to God and stewarded responsibly and justly by people; of God's identification with and preference for the poor and the oppressed (Christ in the rubble); of God's opposition to exploitative power and domination; and of costly discipleship and self-giving love, willing to travel the road of the cross and resurrection in the pursuit of God's reign.
- **Our opposition to false theologies and ideologies.** In our teaching and in our conversation, we will actively expose (a) **political Zionism** as a racist and supremacism ideology, and **Christian Zionism** as a dangerous theology that weaponizes Scripture to support militarism and ethnic supremacy—a false teaching that is inconsistent with the message, spirit, and example of Jesus.
- **Our commitment to relationships of solidarity with Palestinians.** We will continue to build on, and support Mennonite Church Canada's partnership with Bethlehem Bible College and its corollary ministries, the Christ at the Checkpoint Conferences and the Bethlehem Institute of Justice and Peace. We will also nurture relationships with the Sabeel Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem, and Kairos Palestine. At the same time, we will continue to partner with local Canadians of Palestinian origin, many of whom are engaged in advocacy for a just peace in their land.
- **Our commitment to action.** Words and statements, prayers and letters are important, but by themselves, they do not meet the call of this moment. As Palestinians know and have taught us, hope is known in action; discipleship must be embodied. We commit to finding concrete ways of supporting the struggle for Palestinian liberation: buying Palestinian products; supporting the economy of the Palestinian territories by traveling there on solidarity visits, and public demonstrations of support.
- **Our commitment to economic pressure on Israel through BDS.** Until Israel aligns itself to basic standards of human rights and freedoms for Palestinians, we will overtly promote and participate in the Boycott, Divest, and Sanction movement against Israel. These nonviolent actions target companies and organizations that enable Israel's oppression of Palestinians, thwart Palestinian economic and social flourishing, block Palestinian self-determination, and limit the rights and freedoms of Palestinians.
- **Our commitment to political pressure on the government of Canada to uphold** international law in regard to Israel and Palestine. We do this by signing petitions, writing letters to decision-makers in Ottawa, meeting with legislators, and joining and organizing public actions that expose our western complicity in Israeli oppression of Palestinians.
- **Our commitment to use clear language.** We recognize that using euphemisms and understatement--because of a concern for image, or to avoid conflict--feeds complicity and inaction. We will therefore not hold back in naming the sins that have been long been part of the Palestinian reality, but are now more clearly named by academics, historians, human rights leaders, and theologians: **genocide, ethnic cleansing, settler colonialism, racial supremacy, and apartheid.** These structures of oppression and domination define a likely trajectory for the future unless international community can intervene toward a just

and equitable solution that allows all people living between the river and the sea to live together in peace, equality, and security.

We will also try to avoid the word **conflict** in describing the struggle between the Israeli military and Palestinian resistance; this somehow implies that both sides are comparable in strength and status; the relationship is one between oppressor and oppressed. This acknowledgment, however, does not endorse violence of any kind, by oppressor or oppressed; we remain resolute in our commitment to nonviolence, restorative justice, and peaceful resolution.

- **Our commitment to spread awareness of the realities of Palestine.** We do this through workshops, webinars, films, social media, and solidarity visits to Palestine—all intended to call more people to active solidarity with Palestinian siblings in faith and thus build momentum for change toward a just peace for Palestine and Israel.
- **Our commitment to own our history of racism and injustice.** As Canadians and as Mennonites, we are keenly aware of our history of racism toward Jewish and Indigenous peoples. Even as we repent of these sins and commit to healing and reconciliation, however, we refuse to let this past exempt us from the responsibility of standing against similar structures of oppression that are threatening Palestinian well-being and even existence.
- **Our commitment not to confuse criticism of Israel with antisemitism.** We repudiate the IHRA definition of antisemitism that is weaponized against critics of Israeli actions and policies. Instead, we identify with the Jerusalem Declaration endorsed by a spectrum of Jewish academics and human rights practitioners.
- **Our commitment to take the side of justice.** We resolve not to fall into “both-sidesism,” expressing sympathy for Israel’s oppressive actions or giving energy to “dialogue” with people and institutions entrenched in Zionist ideology, whether Christian or Jewish. We take sides for justice and equality for Palestinians and Israeli Jews alike, and against all forms of injustice.
- **Our commitment to build partnerships with kindred advocacy groups:** In the faith community in North America, we will continue to support, be resourced by, and collaborate with Mennonite Action, Canadian Friends of Sabeel, Kairos Canada, Apartheid Free Communities, and others. Beyond these faith-based groups, we will continue to contribute to, and benefit from, partnerships with Canadians for a Just Peace in the Middle East, Independent Jewish Voices, the Palestine Advocacy Network, the Ottawa Forum on Israel and Palestine, and others. Finally, as opportunity allows, we will promote, collaborate, and be resourced by various Palestinian and Israeli peace and justice organizations based in the Holy Land, including Al Haq, Ademeer, B’tselem, Green Olive Solidarity Circle, Wi’am, Zochrot, Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions, Defense of Children Palestine and others promoting nonviolent peace building.