



# The United Church of Canada General Council

## GC24 The Middle East 1971 (1971M321)

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WHEREAS conditions in the Middle East have continued to deteriorate, the numbers of homeless and their suffering have increased, the threat of major war continues, and the chief hope for settlement and peace still seems to be in the implementation of action of the U.N. Security Council by Resolution 242, unanimously adopted on November 22nd, 1967, which

Affirms that the fulfilment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:

Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;

Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats and acts of force; and

Affirms further the necessity for guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;

achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;

guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones;

BE IT RESOLVED that this General Council urge the Government of Canada to press the United Nations to make a renewed and determined effort to persuade Israel and the Arab nations to implement the provisions of Resolution 242.

WHEREAS the Balfour Declaration of 1917 stated “that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine...” (Palestine Royal Commission Report, Cmd. 5479, H.M. Stationary Office, London, 1937, p. 22) and the World Council of Churches stated (through its Central Committee meeting in Canterbury in August 1969, and again at its Consultation on the Palestine Refugee Problem in Cyprus, September 29th-October 4th, 1969) that: “in supporting the establishment of the State of Israel without protecting the rights of the Palestinians, injustice has been done to Palestinian Arabs by the great powers which should be redressed:’ (Palestine Refugees—Aid with Justice, the Report of the Consultation on the Palestine Refugee Problem published by the World Council of Churches 1970, pages 13 and 85); and

WHEREAS it has become clear, particularly since 1967, that the Palestinian Arabs, who number two and a half million, including 1.4 million refugees, registered with UNRWA (International Conciliation, September 1970, No. 579, pp. 16, 27), is a major factor to be reckoned with in any acceptable solution of the Palestine problem:

BE IT RESOLVED that this General Council urge the Government of Canada to back any action of the United Nations that, while guaranteeing the security of Israel, aims to secure justice and self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs.

WHEREAS the Palestinian refugees desperately need increased aid for medical care, education, shelter and food and whereas the United Nations Relief and Works Agency is in a financial crisis; and

WHEREAS a major need for the Palestinians is training and development projects so that they may be enabled to help themselves; and

WHEREAS those Palestinians who have secured education and training have proven to be efficient, industrious and able to support themselves:

BE IT RESOLVED that this General Council:

Commend UNRWA, the Near East Council of Churches, and the other international agencies working in the Middle East for their efficient and dedicated service to the Palestinian refugees;

Commend the Government of Canada for its continued support of UNRWA (\$1.2 million plus \$500,000 worth of wheat in 1968 and 1969, and \$1.35 million in 1970), and support it in its effort to secure more assistance for the refugees from those member states of the U.N. which are not now giving adequate support;

Urge the Government of Canada to look upon UNRWA as a development as well as a relief agency, and, as much as is compatible with the principles of U.N. support, generously increase its annual contribution to UNRWA by additional grants through the Canadian International Development Agency;

WHEREAS it is the conviction of many observers that the idealism of the youth of the Middle East could make a contribution to the cause of peace in that area:

BE IT RESOLVED that this General Council urge the World Council of Churches to approach the appropriate world offices of youth-serving agencies (e.g. WSCF, YMCA, YWCA, YMHA, YWHA, Red Cross, etc.), and encourage and support them in organizing conferences between the young people of Israel and Arab countries, and that this General Council undertake on behalf of the United Church to give financial support to such conferences.

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