



**PALESTINE ISRAEL  
ECUMENICAL NETWORK**

e [contact@pien.org.au](mailto:contact@pien.org.au)  
w [www.pien.org.au](http://www.pien.org.au)

**PIEN's response to 'TIME TO ACT: SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE'  
Resolution To Provincial Synod: Church Of The Province Of Southern Africa**

PIEN is heartened to learn of the recent resolution adopted by the Southern African Anglican Church Provincial Synod, to support the international non-violent Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, to end Israel's military occupation of Palestine. We applaud this courageous stance of delegates from South Africa, Mozambique, eSwatini, Namibia, Angola and Lesotho, who passed the motion unanimously.

The Synod states that:

- The current political nation state of Israel is not the same as biblical Israel, nor should the ideology of Zionism and the religion of Judaism be conflated
- That the current situation in Palestine and Israel "in some respects...[is] worse than apartheid" in South Africa was
- That any pilgrimage to the Holy Land should entail a balanced itinerary that includes contact with Palestinian Christians.

The full text of the resolution can be found here <http://anglican.ink/2019/09/27/anglican-church-in-southern-africa-synod-adopts-anti-israel-pro-bds-resolutions/>.

These statements echo what Palestinian Christians have been reiterating for decades. In the 2009 Kairos Palestine's document 'A Moment of Truth', <https://www.kairospalestine.ps>, Christian Palestinian leaders called on the wider church to "say a word of truth and to take a position of truth with regard to Israel's occupation of Palestinian land...we see boycott and disinvestment as tools of non violence for justice, peace and security for all". After 10 years has that call fallen on deaf ears?!

Some of our own church leaders have likewise urged the Australian community to learn about the reality on the ground in Palestine and to advocate for a peace with justice.

Anglican Bishop George Browning, who is also the President of the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network <https://apan.org.au>, comments on this recent resolution:

*"This decision of the South African Church is no surprise. For a long time the leadership have been likening the experience of Palestinians to the experience of black and coloured South Africans in the Apartheid period. Those who have suffered know what it is like to suffer. Their solidarity provides leadership that the Church universal should follow".*

We at PIEN did not take our position to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement lightly. It was a process of many months of working on our policy, researching our information and formulating the right words to convey clearly what our position is and why we have taken it. All of us on the PIEN committee, along with our Executive Officer, have firsthand experience of life in Palestine through numerous personal exposures over the years. We can testify to the injustices and human rights violations that are metered out to Palestinians every day in so many ways.

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*Australian Christians who seek lasting peace for the people of Palestine and Israel.*

*We aim to equip and inform Australian churches, inspired by Christ's vision for universal reconciliation.*

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It is our own eyewitness accounts and relationships with Palestinians and Israelis working for a just peace, plus the inexhaustible amount of information available through sources on the ground, that has led us to advocate for BDS.

Australian churches and Christians from all denominations overwhelmingly supported and spoke out about the injustices faced by black South Africans during the apartheid era and lent their heart, mind, soul and prayers to support the non-violent anti-apartheid sanctions. So the question is, why isn't the same being done for Palestine?!

We gratefully thank all of you who do work tirelessly to speak up for justice, however, we also lament that many Christians, for whatever reason, choose to remain silent. To those Christians and churches, we plead with you to do some soul searching and to ask yourself why this is the case? What are your reservations? Perhaps you have heard that the state of Israel is equated with the Israel of the bible. Are you prepared to question that for yourselves? If you've been to the Holy Land, have you met with Palestinian Christians? Have you been behind the Separation Barrier or through the check points to expose yourself to the reality of life? Many do not know that Palestinian Christian still live in the land of Jesus.

If you would like to find out more, please go to the PIEN website [www.pien.org.au](http://www.pien.org.au) or follow us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/PalestineIsraelEcumenicalNetwork/>, so that together we can work toward a just peace for the people of Palestine and Israel and can say to the authors of Kairos Palestine "we heard your call".

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