

Frequently Asked Questions

Regarding the Proposed UUA Business Resolution “Divestment from Corporations Complicit in the Violation Of Palestinian Rights”



WHY A BUSINESS RESOLUTION ON PALESTINIAN HUMAN RIGHTS?

- The human and legal rights of Palestinians are being severely and systematically abused under Israel's military occupation. In passing this resolution, UUs will be aligning their investments with their principles and joining an international non-violent movement to end the injustice suffered by Palestinians.
- Lasting peace and security for Israeli Jews, as for other peoples in the region, cannot be achieved if justice for Palestinians continues to be systematically denied.

WHAT IS THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONTEXT OF THIS RESOLUTION?

- The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) guidelines for socially responsible investing call for investing in companies that respect the environment, human rights, labor rights, and other ethical standards and for avoiding investments in companies that perform poorly in these areas.
- The UUA has followed these guidelines in the past by not investing in tobacco, alcohol or defense corporations; by divesting from corporations doing business in apartheid South Africa; and by divesting from fossil fuel corporations.

WHAT DOES THIS RESOLUTION ASK THE UUA TO DO?

- Refrain from holding securities in corporations that are consistently and knowingly complicit in severe violations of human and legal rights in the Palestinian occupied territories, and in particular if those corporations do not respond to all efforts calling on them to desist from their involvement in such abuses; and
- Report to each General Assembly beginning in 2017 and each General Assembly thereafter, on the status of investment decisions related to this resolution.

WHY A BUSINESS RESOLUTION?

- According to the UUA bylaws, a Business Resolution directly involves the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). This is in contrast to Actions of Immediate Witness, Congregational Study Action Issues and Statements of Conscience, all of which are strictly educational in nature.
- Educational efforts and statements of conscience regarding social justice issues are of great value, but more is required of us when we ourselves help to perpetuate injustice. In that case, we must not merely speak out against the injustice but also end our involvement.

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF CORPORATIONS INVOLVED IN SEVERE HUMAN AND LEGAL RIGHTS ABUSES IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES?

- Caterpillar provides Israel's military with specialized bulldozers, including unmanned bulldozers, to demolish Palestinian homes and property.
- HP Inc. and Hewlett Packard Enterprise provide IT services and systems to the Israeli military as well as identification systems to monitor and control the Palestinian population.
- Motorola Solutions provides invisible radar fences, surveillance, and communication equipment to Israel's army.
- G4S provides security equipment and services to Israel's prisons and interrogation centers, West Bank settlements, and military checkpoints.

WOULD DIVESTMENT FROM CORPORATIONS INVOLVED IN SEVERE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES INTERFERE WITH THE UUA'S FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRESERVING WEALTH AND INCOME?

- No it would not. Such companies represent only a small portion of the holdings in the UUA Common Endowment Fund and could be readily replaced with investments in comparable companies from the same industry sectors.
- Moreover, the UUA has already significantly reduced its holdings in several of the above listed corporations over the past several months.

WHY FOCUS ON PALESTINIANS WHEN HUMAN RIGHTS ARE ALSO BEING VIOLATED IN MANY OTHER PLACES?

- The human rights of Palestinians under occupation have been denied for almost 50 years, making Palestinians one of the longest-suffering occupied peoples in the world.
- Most UUs are US citizens and as such have a special responsibility to help end this injustice, as Israel's military occupation could not be maintained without the extensive financial, military and diplomatic support the United States has provided Israel over the last four decades.
- Support for Palestinian human rights in no way precludes support for the human rights of others. Indeed, by ensuring that human rights and international law are respected and upheld in Israel/Palestine we are helping set a precedent for the application of human rights and international law everywhere.

DOES THE RESOLUTION CONFLICT WITH JEWISH VALUES?

- No, it does not.
- The resolution focuses on ending our participation, as Unitarian Universalists, in the violation of Palestinian human rights. It calls for UUA divestment from corporations complicit in the misconduct of the government of Israel, but does not address the existence of the state of Israel, nor the Jewish religion, nor Jews as an ethnic group.
- Many Jews, including many Israeli Jews, oppose the occupation and its attendant human rights violations. Many Jews declare in fact that it is traditional Jewish values that compel them to oppose Israel's oppression of Palestinians. In addition, Jewish Voice for Peace, one of the fastest growing Jewish organizations in the US, is committed to helping end the occupation,

WILL THE RESOLUTION CREATE TENSION WITHIN THE UU COMMUNITY?

- Every human rights and social justice campaign has had to confront tension and resistance to change. It would be irresponsible for us to refuse to act in accord with our deepest values just because such action might create some controversy within our community.
- Concern about the Israeli military occupation is already a prominent issue among Unitarian Universalists. UU ministers, leaders of the UUA, and leaders of UU-associated organizations report that UUs frequently implore them to take official action to combat the injustices imposed on Palestinians. This resolution provides UUs with an opportunity to bring the debate into the open, align our actions with our values, and make a responsible decision concerning our role, as Unitarian Universalists, in this critical human rights issue.

For more details about the resolution visit our website, uujs.org, and facebook page, [facebook.com/uujs](https://www.facebook.com/uujs)