

Resolution Number: 2025 – 002B

Date Submitted: April 1, 2025

**Title: For an End to the Occupation and the Recognition of Palestinian Statehood in the United Nations**

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**Whereas,** the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 2005 established the initiative, “Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land” (recently renamed “SUMUD<sup>1</sup>: for Justice in Palestine and Israel”) and continues to call for equality, human dignity, safety, and security for all the Jews, Christians, and Muslims of the Holy Land; and

**Whereas,** by the pervasive power of sin, violence breeds more violence, including the recent assassination of two young Israeli embassy staffers in Washington, DC. Hatred produces the worldwide escalation of anti-Jewish, anti-Arab, and anti-Muslim sentiment; and anger leads to a craving for vengeance with increasing indiscriminate and unspeakable acts of genocide – all of which incur God’s judgement and call to repentance; and

**Whereas,** the ELCA, in its 1995 Social Statement “For Peace in God’s World,” (p. 14) states:

“Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” These words from the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) are consistent with our understanding of humans created in God’s image. Human rights provide a common universal standard of justice for living with our differences, and they give moral and legal standing to the individual in the international community.

We therefore will continue to teach about human rights, protest their violation, advocate their international codification, and support effective ways to monitor and ensure compliance with them. Our priorities are to:

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<sup>1</sup> The name *sumud*, Arabic “steadfastness,” was chosen at the suggestion of our Palestinian Lutheran companions. Receiving this word as a prophetic gift from our companions reminds us that God’s steadfastness calls us to steadfastness.

- oppose genocide and other grievous violations of human rights such as torture, religious and racial oppression, forced conscription (impressment), forced labor, and war crimes (including organized rape);
- provide for the most basic necessities of the poor; and
- defend the human rights of groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children; and

**Whereas,** the ELCA has been clear in its condemnation of the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack against Israelis and internationals in southern Israel, in its condemnation of the indiscriminate and disproportionate Israeli violence in response to the attack, and in its call for a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire and for the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian political prisoners; and

**Whereas,** United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 called for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 war and UN Security Council Resolutions 446, 452, 465, 471 and 476 established that the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis; and

**Whereas,** Israel's human rights violations against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are egregious and include war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, including

- Indiscriminate bombing resulting in tens of thousands of civilian deaths, including over 15,000 children since October 7, 2023, and the displacement of more than 1.9 million people;
- Deprivation of adequate access to safe drinking water, food, medical care, and electricity;
- Destruction of buildings – including hospitals, places of worship, homes, and schools – and the destruction of electricity, sewage and water infrastructure essential for survival;
- Expropriation of Palestinian land and the expansion of Israeli settlements;
- Settler violence and vandalism with the aim of instilling fear into Palestinian communities;
- Cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of prisoners;
- Sexual and gender-based violence, including public stripping and nudity, sexual harassment and sexual assault;
- Demolition of homes;

- Administrative detention (being held without trial, without charges, without the disclosure of alleged evidence for periods ranging from several months to several years);
- Restrictions on the freedom of movement within the Palestinian Territories leading to a life of constant uncertainty and obstructing the development of a stable economy; therefore, be it

**RESOLVED** that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage ELCA members to advocate for the human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict; and, be it further

**RESOLVED** that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA to direct a letter to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the majority and minority leaders of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives condemning the human rights violations listed above and calling on the U.S. government to

- recognize Palestine as a sovereign state and support Palestine's full membership in the United Nations;
- halt military assistance to [I2025 Synod Assembly Draft Agenda.docx](#) Israel used to devastate Gaza, investigate the use of U.S. military aid to Israel to ensure compliance with U.S. and international human rights law, and work to end the genocide against the Palestinians of Gaza;
- reject schemes to remove Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, address the catastrophic living conditions that could force Palestinians to leave, and work to end the rampant settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank; and, be it further

**RESOLVED** that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/ Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief.