



Presbyterian Mission

**Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations**

# ISRAEL-PALESTINE

## The United Nations in Israel-Palestine

**The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA)** provides core services to 5 million Palestinian refugees living in the Middle East. Services include:

- **Education** for 500,698 students, half of whom are female
- **Health** facilities which support 9 million annual patient visits
- **Social Services** through 102 Women and Community Centers for 294,152 beneficiaries
- **Capital** for 398,154 microfinance loans with a total value of over \$400 million<sup>1</sup>

**The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)** is responsible for guiding emergency response by humanitarian organizations around the world. They work in Gaza and the West Bank with 99 partners on 240 projects across seven major themes: education, health and nutrition, coordination, protection, water, shelter, and food security.<sup>2</sup>

Since OCHA began operations in 2001, they have directly benefited 60,000 Palestinians by providing necessary services in under-served areas. In their upcoming budget cycle, they plan to spend \$539.7 million on projects benefiting 2.5 million people in need.<sup>3</sup>

**The Division of Palestinian Rights** is part of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and provides substantive support to the **Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People** under the UN General Assembly. Together, these bodies monitor the political situation in Israel-Palestine, perform trainings and maintain a database to inform policymakers at the UN, and organize the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November.<sup>4</sup>

## The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) & “The Holy Land”

**Presbyterian Mission:** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been involved in mission efforts in the Middle East for almost two centuries. The church currently supports mission co-workers Douglas Dicks and Rev. Dr. Victor and Sara Makari. In this role, they facilitate relationships with partner churches and make contributions to refugee relief and resettlement. The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program also sponsored a travel-study seminar—the Mosaic of Peace Conference—which focuses on peace, justice, and human rights movements in the region.<sup>5</sup>

**Israel-Palestine Mission Network (IPMN):** In 2004, the General Assembly of the PC(USA) established this mission network with the goal of channeling the church's commitment to a just peace in Israel-Palestine. The IPMN uses their mandate to facilitate education, promote partnership, and coordinate advocacy. Their responsibility is not to speak as the Church but rather *to* the Church about the ever-changing situation on the ground.<sup>6</sup>

**PC(USA) General Assembly Policy on Israel-Palestine:** Since 1948, General Assemblies have addressed the situation in Israel-Palestine, expressing the need for a two-state solution with a just and durable peace.<sup>5</sup> To that end, church policy in recent years has focused on non-violent resistance to the occupation of the Palestinian territories through shareholder advocacy with corporations that have done business with Israeli settlements. Past General Assemblies have condemned unjust practices by the state of Israel and called for the use of diplomatic tools to gain compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Israel. During the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly (2018) in St. Louis, the Assembly reaffirmed the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and urged the state of Israel to comply with international law regarding discrimination against its Christian and Muslim citizens and other ethnic minorities.<sup>7</sup>

## **Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN)**

Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations is called to act on an issue when it meets three criteria: the PC(USA) has a policy regarding the topic, partner churches are in favor of action, and it appears on the UN agenda. In the case of Israel/Palestine, PMUN has interpreted its ministry through participation in ecumenical advocacy on the subject.

**Israel Palestine NGO Working Group (IPWG):** Many non-governmental organizations have been active on Israel/Palestine at the United Nations since its founding. Ecumenical partners channel their humanitarian work and support for human rights through advocacy on IPWG. This includes highlighting the work of churches to relevant UN bodies like the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA) and the UN Division of Palestinian Rights. The working group also provides a space for NGOs to connect and share information and events concerning the common goal of a just and durable peace in Israel/Palestine.<sup>8</sup>

**NGO Working Group on the Security Council:** The NGO Working Group was founded in 1995 to promote dialogue between the NGO community with foreign officials, policy experts, and members of the Security Council. PMUN involvement in the working group creates an exchange of information and perspective between the PC(USA) and the principal UN organ for the maintenance of international peace and security.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-needs-overview-2018-dashboard>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/page/hrp-data-interactive-charts>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.un.org/undpa/en/palestinianrights>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/global/israel-palestine/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://new.israelpalestinemissionnetwork.org/home/who-we-are>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000242>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/D-Wildman-statement-for-IPWG-at-CEIRPP-4Sep2018.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngo-working-group-on-the-security-council-4-24.html>