

February 25, 2020

Dear Members of Congress:

As U.S. based Christian communions and organizations we are deeply committed to a peaceful and just end to the conflict in Israel-Palestine. We affirm the need for strong—but fair— U.S. leadership to help encourage a future in which Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in peace and security with both peoples truly flourishing. It is in this spirit that we write to share our deep disappointment with the Trump Administration’s announced “Peace to Prosperity” proposal, which we believe will only further perpetuate violence, fear, and discord.

Our faith calls us to be peacemakers, but we know that for a peace plan to succeed, it must take into account the voices of all who will be affected. It must not, as this proposal did, predetermine the issues and outcome without substantive consultation of the major parties, in this instance, Palestinian voices and leadership. And despite their exclusion, the success of the plan is placed squarely on the Palestinians, with the promise of a limited future autonomy, contingent on their meeting stipulations which they had no role in shaping. Over the next four years the plan envisions a maintenance of the current status quo without any recourse for change for Palestinians who will continue to live under Israeli occupation and who face ongoing and systematic violations of their rights.

A first step outlined in the plan is for the funding of the “Prosperity to Peace Master Fund” and the “International Fund” for Palestine. As noted above, these funds were developed without input from Palestinians and we ask that you refrain from funding them until Palestinians are given sufficient opportunity to weigh in on the purpose of these funds and agree to their parameters.

Meanwhile, it is incumbent upon Congress to take immediate steps to work toward a just and lasting solution to the conflict in Israel-Palestine. To this end, we call on Congress to commit to robust funding for bilateral assistance to the West Bank and Gaza as you begin discussions regarding FY 2021 funding. This would send a positive signal of the U.S. government’s intention as a fair partner for peace. Such funding provides critical medical, educational, and food assistance to the most vulnerable Palestinians. Additionally, the U.S. must reinstate funding to UNRWA, the only UN entity providing relief and assistance to the more than five million Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. If there is to be any chance for a viable Palestinian state, Congress must also take decisive action to oppose unilateral Israeli annexation of and continued Israeli military control over occupied Palestinian lands, including East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and ending the blockade and control of Gaza.

Despite our strong opposition to the proposal put forth by President Trump, we believe peace and reconciliation, when diligently and authentically pursued, can be achieved. With the conviction that another way is possible for both the Israeli and Palestinian people, we ask that you ensure U.S. policies will result in the recognition of full human rights and equality for all who

live in the land called Holy. It is only through committing to uphold these rights and to ending the occupation that a future in which Israelis and Palestinians living together in shared peace and security can be realized.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Baptists
American Friends Service Committee
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Christian Reformed Church, Office of Social Justice
Churches for Middle East Peace
Church of the Brethren, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy
Church World Service
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Evangelicals 4 Justice
The Episcopal Church
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Moravian Church in America
National Council of Churches
Pax Christi USA
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Reformed Church in America
United Church of Christ
The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society