

# An Open Letter to Our Friends in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Urging Fair Treatment of Israel:

You are being asked to vote on a resolution that denies Israel's right to defend its people, more than 1000 of whom have been killed by Palestinian terrorists in recent years. The fence being constructed is an action of last resort, coming after ten years of murderous attacks against children in their beds, commuters in buses and teenagers in cafes. All innocent.

The ELCA leadership opposes active measures Israel has taken to defend itself, such as targeting Palestinian suicide bombers and those who send them; now it opposes passive measures, such as the fence. What does that leave? Should Israel give free rein to suicide bombers?

And why is Israel, alone among the nations, denied the right of self-defense? Isn't this tantamount to denying Israel's right to exist?

The fence (only 5% is a concrete "wall") has worked, helping to dramatically reduce the carnage. Fewer suicide bombers have also meant fewer Israeli incursions and fewer Palestinian casualties. Thanks to the fence, scores of checkpoints have been removed, giving Palestinians freer movement. In fact, Israel has gone to great lengths to minimize the difficulties the fence causes, repeatedly altering the course of the structure to alleviate hardship, providing scores of gates to enable movement back and forth, replanting more than 60,000 olive trees for Palestinian farmers.

Why are these realities omitted from ELCA's resolution?

ELCA proposes to "Stand for Justice in the Holy Land." But as it is written in the Book of James: "True justice is the harvest reaped by peacemakers from seeds sown in a spirit of peace."

If ELCA is acting in the spirit of peace, why has it ignored in its resolution and related materials any reference to the role of the Palestinians themselves in fostering hatred and violence? Why not one reference to the continuous indoctrination to Jew-hatred and to pursuit of Israel's annihilation that has been standard fare in Palestinian media, mosques and schools, indoctrination which long pre-dates the Israeli presence in the West Bank and Gaza, and indeed has been pervasive in the Arab world since Israel's creation?

Please consider when you vote a recent sermon delivered by a religious leader who, like many of his colleagues employed by the Palestinian Authority, has a long history of similar invective. The sermon was broadcast on official PA television:

*We have ruled the world before, and by Allah, the day will come when we will rule the entire world again... We will rule America... [and] Britain and the entire world - except for the Jews. The Jews will not enjoy a life of tranquility under our rule... Listen to the Prophet Mohammed, who tells you about the end that awaits Jews. The stones and trees will want the Muslims to finish off every Jew.*

You are being asked by your leaders to support an anti-Israel resolution that ignores such dangerous rhetoric, is predicated solely on the false claim that Israel's presence in the territories is the source of hatred and conflict in the area, and disregards entirely the role and responsibility of the Palestinians in fostering the violence that continues today.

Thank you very much for considering these issues as you cast your vote.



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