

Mennonite Church USA Votes to Boycott Israel

The Mennonite Church USA voted Thursday to divest itself from any financial holdings with companies profiting from Israel's "occupation."

A divestment resolution, which received 98 percent support among the 550 delegates at the church's national convention in Orlando, Florida, says the Protestant sect "opposes the Israeli military occupation while taking a stand against anti-Semitism and affirming the need to build stronger relationships with Jewish communities."

The resolution asks the church's \$3 billion financial agency, Everence, to "review investment practices for the purpose of withdrawing investments from companies that are profiting from the occupation." It also calls on individual adherents of the Mennonite denomination to review their investments.

The economic impact is expected to be minimal.

Mennonites had rejected a divestment proposal at their last national meeting two years ago amid fears that the resolution would be considered anti-Jewish. In addition to opposing anti-Semitism, the statement adopted Thursday endorses a review of the Mennonite response to the Holocaust.

Drawing its roots from the Radical Reformation of the 16th century in Germany and Switzerland, Mennonite Church USA was formed as a result of the 2002 merger between the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Like other mainline Protestant movements, Mennonite Church USA has suffered substantial membership declines in recent decades. Its stated membership was just 75,000 in 2016.

Earlier this month, another mainline Protestant church, the United Church of Christ, overwhelmingly approved a resolution condemning Israel for its alleged treatment of Palestinian children. {eo}

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