

ACTION REQUEST AR-3

2018 OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

1 TITLE: Child Incarceration and the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child

2 SPONSORING GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL: OR/ID HOLY LAND TASK FORCE, OR/ID PEACE WITH

3 JUSTICE, OR/ID METHODIST FEDERATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE,

4 SPOKESPERSON: DEE POUJADE

5 SPOKESPERSON'S ADDRESS: 2545 SW TERWILLIGER BLVD., APT. 510, PORTLAND 97201

6 SPOKESPERSON'S E-MAIL: traveling.mimi@gmail.com

7 SPOKESPERSON'S TELEPHONE: 503-2999-4510 (H); 503-310-5577 (mobile)

8 **AMENDED IN YELLOW**, ADD IN BOLD, ~~DELETE IN STRIKEOUT~~

9 **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDATION: 28 YES, 0 NO, 1 ABSTAIN**

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12 **We petition the Oregon-Idaho Annual conference to take the following action:**

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14 Call on the United States Congress to join with 196 other nations in ratifying the United
15 Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; and

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17 Direct the Conference Secretary to write to the **Oregon and Idaho** Congressional
18 Representatives, as well as the President, Vice President and Secretary of State, encouraging
19 them to support pending and proposed legislation regarding the rights of children, including
20 but not limited to HR 4391 ("Promoting Human Rights by Ending Israeli Military Detention of
21 Palestinian Children"); and

22

23 Charge the OR/ID Holy Land Task Force to educate congregations and individuals as to issues
24 regarding the detention of children, as well as other human rights issues relating to the
25 illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine.

26

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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29 **What will this action accomplish?**

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31 The United States is the only member of the 197 members of the United Nations which has
32 not yet ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the meantime,
33 incidents of incarcerating and/or detaining and even torturing children has increased in a
34 number of countries, including the US. As a body with a strong foundation and history of
35 working for the principles of social justice, we need to be on the side of international law and to
36 tell our elected officials that there are indeed "universal principles" that should apply accords all
37 cultures and contexts, and not be revitalized for the convenience of any ruling party.

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1 This legislation would put our national elected officials “on notice” that we in the United
2 Methodist Church believe that the children of the world deserve to be protected and cared
3 for.

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5 **Why is it important?**

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7 The Book of Discipline of the UMC explicitly affirms the rights of children,¹ and

8 The United Methodist Church has specifically affirmed the United Nations Convention on the
9 Rights of the Child,² which says “No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel,
10 inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” and that “No child shall be deprived of his
11 or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall
12 be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the
13 shortest appropriate period of time,”³ and

14 The Nobel Prize winning non-profit organization Human Rights Watch reports that the
15 United States leads the industrialized world in the number and percentage of children in
16 juvenile detention facilities,⁴ and

17 Human Rights Watch also reports that children are routinely imprisoned in the Democratic
18 Republic of Congo, Iraq, Somalia, and Syria for alleged association with armed or extremist
19 groups, and that Egypt and Israel imprison children through military rather than civilian
20 courts,⁵ and

21 The United Methodist Women have made the issue of incarceration of racial minorities and
22 the well-being of children and young people as two of their priorities for the 2016-2020
23 quadrennium,⁶

24 1) 2016 Book of Discipline, Paragraph 162 “C” [http://hrusa.org/advocacy/community-](http://hrusa.org/advocacy/community-faith/methodist1.shtm)
25 [faith/methodist1.shtm](http://hrusa.org/advocacy/community-faith/methodist1.shtm)

26 2) 2016 Book of Resolutions, 6025 “A”

27 3) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 37 A,B
28 <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

29 4) <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/children-behind-bars>

30 5) <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/children-behind-bars>

31 6) [https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/general-conference/issuepriorities2016-](https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/general-conference/issuepriorities2016-20.pdf)
32 [20.pdf](https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/general-conference/issuepriorities2016-20.pdf)

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How will it be carried out? By whom?

The Conference Secretary will be directed to send the letter set forth as “Exhibit 1” to Congressional Representatives for Oregon and Idaho, and to the President, Vice President and Secretary of State. The Holy Land Task Force, in cooperation with the other co-sponsors of this resolution, will publicize this resolution through their gatherings, newsletters and social media.

How much will it cost? Where will the money come from?

The cost of postage for the (14) letters will be paid from funds that the Holy Land Task Force has designated for this purpose. There will be no additional cost except for the cost of compiling and publishing the journal.

AR-3: Attachment

Letter to be sent to *Congressional Representatives, as well as the President, Vice President and Secretary of State, encouraging them to support pending and proposed legislation regarding the rights of children, including but not limited to HR 4391 (“Promoting Human Rights by Ending Israeli Military Detention of Palestinian Children”).*

1 Dear [XXX]:

2 In June 2018, the Oregon-Idaho United Methodist Annual Conference voted to formally endorse the
3 application of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as it applies to incarcerated children. It
4 further voted to call on the United States Congress to join with 196 other nations in ratifying the
5 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We were surprised to learn that, although the
6 United States was instrumental in drafting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is not a
7 signatory, and respectfully request that Congress take whatever steps are necessary for the United
8 States to take its place with the rest of the world in supporting the rights of children.

9 In addition, the Oregon-Idaho United Methodist Annual Conference, through this legislative action,
10 voted to write their elected officials, encouraging them to support pending and proposed legislation
11 regarding the rights of children, including but not limited to HR 4391 (“Promoting Human Rights by
12 Ending Israeli Military Detention of Palestinian Children”).

13 We understand that Palestinian children are not alone in being arrested and detained in a manner
14 contrary to the law and in violation of their human rights. We understand, in fact, that United States
15 leads the industrialized world in the number and percentage of children in juvenile detention
16 facilities, and that, according to Human Rights Watch, children are routinely imprisoned in the
17 Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Somalia, and Syria for alleged association with armed or
18 extremist groups, and that Egypt and Israel imprison children through military rather than civilian
19 courts.

20 The Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church consists of 180 churches and
21 approximately 45,000 congregants.

22 We urge you to recognize that human rights, especially with regard to children, are universal
23 principles that should apply across all cultures and contexts, and not be revitalized for the
24 convenience of any ruling party.

25 Sincerely,

26 [Conference Secretary, on behalf of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of the United Methodist
27 Church]

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