

The Following letter was sent to Ms. Cheri DiNovo on March 15, 2010

Let Palestinian Christians Worship this Easter with No Apartheid Passes

## Easter Appeal to Ms. Cheri DiNovo, Ontario MPP and United Church Minister

I have followed with dismay the role you played, perhaps unwittingly, in the destructive Ontario Legislature motion on Feb. 25, 2010 regarding Israeli Apartheid Week. You were quoted in the Star as saying that the word apartheid is "inflammatory" and "used inappropriately in the case of Israel", and that "Apartheid does not help the discussion".

<http://www.thestar.com/news/ontario/article/771761--mpps-decry-linking-israel-to-apartheid>.

It was painful to hear these words from a NDP legislator and especially after we knew you are also a United Church Minister.

Last August, the United Church Conference passed a resolution that legitimized Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestinians (Christians and Muslims), supported the discriminatory nature of Israel and annulled the right of Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land. The resolution 1(g) called for:

"The recognition by the emergent State of Palestine of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state within safe and secure borders."

This was then followed by a contradictory clause about "equal citizenship rights, protections, privileges and responsibilities for all", rendered meaningless however by the earlier section.

It is outrageous in the first place to recognize any modern state as a religious entity, which excludes others and makes them feel unwanted. What is more outrageous is to then tell those excluded people they must also recognize their own oppressors. It smacks of a sense of cultural superiority and accordingly racism.

This United Church resolution and then your support for the legislative resolution that intended to silence students on university campuses, who want to explain and raise awareness about the injustices the Palestinian people are facing, are a betrayal of the Palestinians and especially the Christian Palestinians.

We are aware of the bullying role of the Zionist leadership, who forced themselves on the United Church conference at times uninvited. However, we believe that succumbing to such pressure is unethical and unprincipled and does not provide any spiritual or community

leadership. Consequently, Zionist officials have openly bragged about their role in influencing church policies (see: <http://www.cjc.ca/2009/09/03/the-united-church-conference-a-first-hand-account/>).

I do not know if you are aware of the book "The unHoly Land" by Reverend Dr. A.C. Forrest, the former editor of the *United Church Observer*. You might learn about, Zionism, some of the Zionist slanderous tactics and also about his courage, commitment to the truth, his dedication to humanity and the teachings of his church. Here is a quote from his book: "I have found no way to criticize the policies of the State of Israel, or question the philosophy of political Zionism, or tell my readers what the facts of the Middle East are, and escape slander and libel from the Zionist-Israeli community."  
<http://www.canpalnet-ottawa.org/The%20Unholy%20Land.pdf>

As a Palestinian Christian who has been the victim of Israeli Apartheid and experienced it first hand, I support the many anti-Apartheid South African leaders who have stated clearly and categorically that Israeli Apartheid is worse than South African Apartheid. A relevant example now is that Palestinian Christians (and Muslims for that matter) are not allowed freedom of worship at their holy places by the Israeli government. **Please note the call by Palestinian Christian leaders this Easter to abolish the Israeli permits needed to go to the Holy Sepulchre Church in Jerusalem in the article entitled "Palestinians Demand Entry to Jerusalem without permits during the Holy Week of Easter".**  
[http://www.imemc.org/index.php?obj\\_id=53&story\\_id=58203](http://www.imemc.org/index.php?obj_id=53&story_id=58203)

I challenge you along with your fellow United Church members to do something in solidarity with your Christian brothers and sisters.

Many Palestinian Christians feel incredibly frustrated and betrayed by Canada's mainstream churches. Many Western Christians will state they are trying to address the church's history of racism and abuse against Jewish people. But this motivation cannot be used as a convenient smokescreen, which it often is, to participate in the oppression of yet another people, in this case the Palestinians. The guilt of western Christians must not be another burden for the struggling Palestinians to have to bear.

I urge everyone to act now to concretely support the Palestinians, in ways the Palestinians say are important, and to show courage and leadership on this issue. Please do not repeat the mistakes made by Western churches in the horrific oppression of our indigenous sisters

and brothers in Canada. This time there is no chance to say you did not comprehend the magnitude of what was unfolding.  
History will not be kind - Justice delayed is justice denied!

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