

1 **Document: 700.06**

2 **Name: It's Time To Divest From Countries Involved in Prolonged Military Occupations**

3 **Author(s): Paula Roderick, Broadway UMC**

4 **CCFA Action:**

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7 **ACTION:**

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9 In 2019, the Northern Illinois Conference voted to support the Resolution to Exclude Sovereign Debt  
10 (Also Known As Government Debt) of Countries Involved in Prolonged Military Occupations in  
11 Violation of International Law. We urged our own investment managers, including Wespath, as well as  
12 boards and agencies throughout the connection to “exclude the purchase of bonds from three governments  
13 that maintain prolonged military occupation and that have been the subject of United Nations Security  
14 Council resolutions and / or International Court of Justice rulings until the time when each government  
15 ends their occupation and ceases their human rights violations.” NIC identified three nations: Morocco  
16 which has occupied Western Sahara since 1976; Turkey, occupying Northern Cyprus since 1974; and  
17 Israel, occupying the Palestinian Territories since 1967. In 2024, the UM General Conference adopted  
18 the resolution urging UM investors not to invest in the bonds of these countries because they are  
19 maintaining prolonged illegal military occupations.  
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21 In support of this call to divest, UMKR has initiated a petition calling on Wespath to take further action to  
22 screen out investments from bonds of three nations engaging in prolonged military occupation. We call  
23 on all clergy and lay members of NIC who have accounts with Wespath to faithfully consider joining in  
24 this call, and to sign UMKR’s petition, as individuals and in their role as faith leaders.  
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26 Moreover, Illinois also has invested more than \$40 million dollars of taxpayer funds in Israeli bonds since  
27 2023; and currently has over \$145 million dollars invested there. We call on our conference leaders to  
28 share both our own resolution and our GC resolution with lawmakers here in Illinois, to respectfully  
29 request that they direct the Illinois Treasurer to divest Illinois public funds from Israeli government bonds  
30 as well, and to discern other ways to support the NIC and UM GC resolutions.  
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32 **RATIONALE:**

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34 When we buy sovereign debt (government bonds) we lend our funds to governments without any formal  
35 mechanism for advocacy. Governments conducting prolonged military occupations are violating  
36 international law and human rights standards. Such investments are morally wrong and financially risky.  
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38 “Sovereign debt” describes bonds issued by a nation’s government as a means of borrowing money from  
39 organizations or persons; governments use money raised from the sale of such bonds at their discretion.  
40 Holders (buyers) of government bonds are therefore on record as supporting, through their purchase,  
41 whatever activities the country that issues (sells) the bonds may choose to do.  
42

43 The NIC and GC resolutions call on Morocco, Turkey, and Israel to end their *prolonged* military  
44 occupations. People who have been subjected to those occupations are being denied their self-

1 determination in violation of Article 73 of the Charter for the United Nations.<sup>1</sup> The above-named  
2 occupying powers have been named by the United Nations Security Council and/or the International  
3 Court of Justice as having engaged in *prolonged* military occupations, are violators of international law  
4 and responsible for human rights abuses including reduction of food assistance to refugees, failure to  
5 protect civilian persons, land confiscation, home demolition, and violence against civilians<sup>2</sup>. We have  
6 seen Israel’s occupation of Palestine with respect to the people of Gaza intensified as Israel intentionally  
7 withholds food, water, access to health care, access to electricity from this largely young, refugee  
8 population.

10 UMKR explains the need for this new petition<sup>3</sup> “It has been almost a year since that landmark decision at  
11 General Conference. Given the urgency of this moment – in particular the devastation that Palestinians in  
12 Gaza and the West Bank are facing – UMKR has drafted a petition for those who would like to see this  
13 important call from the General Conference fulfilled in our church... It clearly is the position of the  
14 General Conference – the only body that speaks for our denomination – that **United Methodists should**  
15 **not be invested in these bonds** that fund illegal and destructive occupations, causing suffering to  
16 millions.”

18 As people of faith, if we seek to hold our investment boards to a standard that excludes from investment  
19 “the sovereign debt of any country demonstrating a prolonged and systematic pattern of human rights  
20 abuses...”<sup>4</sup>, we must also take steps to address where our state invests public funds.

<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-xi/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2004/07/108912-international-court-justice-finds-israeli-barrier-palestinian-territory-illegal#.WltesTLMzfY>; [http://undocs.org/S/RES/2430\(2018\)](http://undocs.org/S/RES/2430(2018))

<sup>3</sup> See link here for text of petition and other information:  
[https://www.kairosresponse.org/wespath\\_petition\\_2025.html](https://www.kairosresponse.org/wespath_petition_2025.html).

<sup>4</sup> Wespath’s Human Rights Investment Guideline speaks to addressing human rights abuses, and it has developed the Social Values Choice Bond Fund, which does not hold bonds from Israel, Turkey, or Morocco. However, to date, Wespath has not applied this standard to all its investment funds.

1 **Document: 702.02**

2 **Name: Amend the Standing Rules to separate the joint Board of Pensions, Health Benefits, and**  
3 **Equitable Compensation**

4 **Author(s): Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Luis Reyes-Rosario, Wendy Hardin**  
5 **Hermann, Kristin Gaughan, Dan VanHaften, Deborah Dangerfield, Matt Smith, Kristin**  
6 **Fischer, Glynis Massey, Harry Nicol, Danita Anderson, Beth Swanick, Cheryl Weaver,**  
7 **Elaine Moy)**

8 **CCFA Action:**

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11 **ACTION:**

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13 **The Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits recommends reversing the 2024 amendment**  
14 **to the Northern Illinois Conference Standing Rules: to remove Equitable Compensation**  
15 **responsibilities (2016 BoD ¶625) from the Board of Pensions and Health Benefits (2016 BoD ¶639),**  
16 **as approved at the 2024 Northern Illinois Annual Conference, and create a stand-alone NIC**  
17 **Equitable Compensation Committee, separate and distinct from the NIC Board of Pensions and**  
18 **Health Benefits.**

19 This action will direct the NIC Committee on Nominations to establish membership according to  
20 2020/2024 Book of Discipline guidelines (¶624) for the Equitable Compensation Committee.

21 **RATIONALE:**

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23 The 2024 NIC Annual Conference action was based on the 2016 Book of Discipline. 2024 General  
24 Conference action established direction in the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline that makes the Joint Board  
25 of Pensions, Benefits, and Equitable Compensation, as approved at the 2024 NIC Annual Conference  
26 incompatible with the now current Book of Discipline.

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28 1: *“There shall be in each annual conference a commission on equitable compensation. ... It is the*  
29 *purpose of the commission on equitable compensation to support full-time clergy serving as pastors in the*  
30 *charges of the annual conference. The commission shall meet at least twice a year for the purpose of: (a)*  
31 *recommending conference standards for pastoral support; (b) administering funds to be used as base*  
32 *compensation supplementation...” 20/24 BoD ¶ 624.1,2*

33 2: *There shall be organized in each annual conference a conference board, auxiliary to Wespath, to be*  
34 *known as the conference board of pensions... that shall have charge of the interests and work of providing*  
35 *for and contributing to the support, relieve, assistance, and pensioning of clergy and their families, other*  
36 *church workers, and lay employees... 20/24 BoD ¶638.1*

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38 Reestablishing the Board of Pensions, as separate and distinct from the Commission on Equitable  
39 Compensation, allows each group to examine the rewards of pastoral work: pension, benefits, and base  
40 compensation, giving each the full attention those rewards require.