

Canadian church alters Israel investment plan: Decides to back "ethically responsible business" in Holy Land

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The United Church of Canada has dropped a proposal to sell off stock in companies that contribute to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and has decided to back "ethically responsible business" in the Holy Land.

The 39th general council of the largest Protestant church in Canada, meeting in Ontario, adopted a resolution August 17 calling for "a pro-investment strategy with companies which engage in ethically responsible business" in Israel and in Palestinian areas.

The council backed off a resolution calling for a "selective, phased divestment" from Canadian and international companies involved in the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories after hearing from two rabbis with opposing stances and a church investment specialist. Canadian Jewish organizations also had weighed in with their objections to divestment.

The resolution approved by the general council calls for the United Church to contribute to the realization of a just peace in the region through making new financial investments only in peaceful pursuits.

Nonpeaceful pursuits would include those of Canadian and international companies that provide products, services or technologies to any government or organization that refuses to recognize the legitimate rights of the state of Israel, or that sustains and supports the occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel.

The church will also refrain from investment in companies that provide financing for or assist in the construction or maintenance of a separation barrier erected by Israel within the occupied territories. -*Ecumenical News International*