



The Jewish Federations®  
OF NORTH AMERICA

ISRAEL  
ACTION  
NETWORK

JCPA

JEWISH COUNCIL  
FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Project in  
partnership with JCPA

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

June 20, 2014

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Max Samis, Rabinowitz Communications, [max@rabinowitz.com](mailto:max@rabinowitz.com), (o) 202-265-3000, (c) 202-681-2528  
Emily Hochberg, Israel Action Network, [Emily.Hochberg@jewishfederations.org](mailto:Emily.Hochberg@jewishfederations.org), (212) 684-9713

**Jewish Council for Public Affairs and Israel Action Network Express Outrage, Disappointment and Sadness over Presbyterian Church (USA) Divestment Move**

NEW YORK – The biennial General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) voted today to divest from three American companies because of their sales to Israel, by a very narrow margin of 310-303. The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), together with the Israel Action Network (IAN), an initiative of The Jewish Federations of North America in partnership with the JCPA, created to counter assaults on Israel’s legitimacy, issued the following statement:

“The decision by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to divest from three U.S.-based companies because of their sales to Israel is outrageous. We are deeply disappointed, hurt, and saddened. But we are not surprised, given the deep animus that a determined core group of church officials has demonstrated against both the Jewish people and the State of Israel,” said JCPA President Rabbi Steve Gutow. “This decision will undoubtedly have a devastating impact on relations between mainstream Jewish groups and the national Presbyterian Church (USA). We hold the leadership of the PCUSA accountable for squandering countless opportunities, not only to act responsibly to advance prospects for Middle East peace, but also to isolate and repudiate the radical, prejudiced voices in their denomination.”

IAN Managing Director Geri Palast remarked, “It is troubling and tragic to see the Presbyterian Church (USA) choose to reject partnership in favor of partisanship, ignoring the entreaties of every major organizational voice in the American Jewish community, including over 1,700 religious leaders from the four movements and all fifty states. The publication of ‘Zionism Unsettled,’ an anti-Jewish and anti-Israel congregational guide, connected the dots between this church action and efforts to eliminate the Jewish state of Israel. The only path to a just peace is a two-state solution. Divestment and BDS are the tools of division and a one-state movement.”

“We are deeply grateful to hundreds of Presbyterians who tried to lead their church in a more positive direction,” said JCPA Vice President and General Council, Ethan Felson, who attended the entire proceeding. “Unfortunately, the problems in the PCUSA run very deep and individuals who support both Israel and Palestinians, as well as relations with the mainstream Jewish community, have been silenced.”

“Despite this distressing decision, we are confident that many Presbyterians and Jews in communities across the country reject this divisive move. May they be repairers of the breach, and work for shared goals of justice for all, peace, and a two-state solution,” Gutow added. “Our fervent hope and prayer is that members of the church who seek a more constructive path will, in the fullness of time, be able to

overcome the forces of divisiveness in their denomination and foster a new season of mutual understanding.”

The JCPA and IAN have worked closely with Jewish Federations, Jewish Community Relations Councils, rabbis, and national Jewish agencies and their affiliates around the country to foster dialogue and programs that support peace and reconciliation and reject delegitimization and divestment.

###

*The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) is the public affairs arm of the organized Jewish community, and serves as the national coordinating and advisory body for the 14 national and 125 local agencies comprising the field of Jewish community relations.*

*The Israel Action Network (IAN) is a strategic initiative of The Jewish Federations of North America, in partnership with the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), created to counter the assault on Israel’s legitimacy and proactively lead the conversation about the Jewish, democratic state of Israel.*