

Convention addresses global issues of peace and justice

By Matthew Davies

(Episcopal News Service) Support for troubled and besieged communities in Haiti, Honduras, Pakistan and Sudan, as well as a call for an end to the blockade in Cuba, were among international concerns addressed by General Convention at its July 8-17 meeting in Anaheim, California.

While convention-goers found unanimity on most action concerning global peace and justice issues, the bishops rejected a resolution on Israel/Palestine, with opponents calling for a more balanced approach.

The resolution ([B027](#)), which never made it to the House of Deputies because of the bishops' action, had called for dismantling the wall between Israel and Palestine, creating a sovereign Palestinian state and ending "the ongoing confiscation of Palestinian land, demolition of housing and the displacement of people." Previous General Convention or Executive Council resolutions have addressed all of these concerns. The bishops' action last week did not repudiate earlier resolutions.

In a statement following convention, the Rev. Canon Brian Grieves, senior director for mission centers, and Maureen Shea, director of the Office of Government Relations, said: "The Episcopal Church, based on resolutions passed at its previous General Conventions regarding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, remains firmly committed to a just peace that ends the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, guarantees Israel's security and Palestinian aspirations for a viable sovereign state with Jerusalem as the shared capital of both Israel and Palestine."

They noted that previously adopted resolutions include "opposition to the settlements built on Palestinian land, the building of the 'separation barrier' or wall, and the demolition of homes. These resolutions also call for an end to violence and anti-Semitism."

New areas of emphasis in B027 had included a commendation of President Barack Obama for his engagement in Israeli-Palestinian peace from his first day in office, including his naming of Special Envoy George Mitchell; and a call for unfettered humanitarian aid and commercial-trade opportunity for residents of the Gaza strip affected by the Israeli blockade.

Bishop Edward Little of Northern Indiana called the proposed resolution "deeply troubling" and urged defeat.

Several bishops, however, urged passage. Among them, Bishop James Jelinek of Minnesota, a member of the National and International Concerns legislative committee, said the resolution was designed to "get Israel's attention."

"Walls are always troublesome," said Bishop Geralyn Wolf of Rhode Island, who opposed the measure. "However, I do believe the resolution is not as balanced as I'd like it to be."

The bishops did find common ground on a resolution ([A037](#)) urging every Episcopalian to "pray, especially in Advent and during the Christmas season, for the wall around Bethlehem and all other barriers to come down."