

Update on work from the Conference

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Action Required	Decision
Resolution	23/1. The Council receives the report.

The Council is asked to note the following updates on work from the 2018 Conference and previous Conferences.

1. Notice of Motion 2018/202B: Universal Credit

In light of the recent National Audit Office Report (15th June 2018) on the failings of the Universal Credit Benefit system, of the Methodist Church's renewed emphasis on Our Calling, the resolutions of the 3Generate report regarding Districts and individuals acting on injustice and the Vice-President's Call to Action on Injustice, the Conference:

- *directs the Methodist Council to continue to lobby Parliament about the injustices caused by the Universal Credit System.*
- *encourages Local Churches and individuals to challenge these injustices.*
- *directs the Methodist Council to provide resources to help Local Churches to engage with this issue including writing to their MP.*
- *mandates the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference to write a letter on behalf of the Conference to the Department of Work and Pensions which demands the cessation of the roll out of Universal Credit and an independent commission into the effects of the system (as recommended in the JPIT briefing June 2018).*

The Conference adopted the Motion.

In the light of this notice of motion, the Council is asked to encourage the Joint Public Issues Team in its ongoing work in this area. The letter directed in the fourth bullet point was sent in July 2018. Therefore, noting that the campaigning work continues, it is considered that the specific directions of the Conference have been carried out.

2. Notice of Motion 2018/212: Gaza

The Conference expresses its extreme concern for the deteriorating conditions in the Gaza Strip and notes the widely recognised concern by NGOs, the United Nations and Government bodies that the two million residents of the area now face conditions that are inhumane. Water is unsafe to drink, sewage is untreated, food is insufficient for the population, eighty common medicines are unavailable and electricity is on for a maximum period of four hours a day.

In addition as a result of the huge number of casualties over the period of the "March of Return" medical facilities in Gaza – already under strain due to the blockade – are now unable to cope.

The Conference notes that the primary reason for this situation is the blockade of Gaza by the Israeli authorities, but notes also that Egypt and the Palestinian Authority also bear some responsibility for these deteriorating conditions. The Conference recognises that a violent response to this situation only makes the situation worse and therefore urges the leaders of Hamas to cease provoking Israel by its use of burning kites and rockets.

The Conference calls for the following actions:

- *for a letter to be written to the Israeli Ambassador from the Conference demanding that the Israeli Army observe International Law by ceasing to fire on unarmed civilians.*
- *for British Methodists to contact their elected representatives and urge Her Majesty's Government to:*
 - *undertake concerted efforts to bring the blockade to an end.*
 - *impress upon the Israeli Government the importance of adhering to International Law - especially in regard to protests on the borders of Gaza.*
- *for Methodists across the world to observe the World Methodist Council's call for seven days of prayer for Gaza and the Holy Land, from the first to the seventh of July.*

The Conference adopted the Motion.

The letter directed in the notice of motion was sent in July 2018 and the Joint Public Issues Team maintains a watching brief on the issues raised. It is considered that the directions of the Conference have been completed.

3. Memorial M25 (2018): Yemen

...the Conference nevertheless endorsed the request of the Yorkshire North and East District Synod that the British Government cease arms supplies to Saudi Arabia and directs the Secretary to write accordingly to the Foreign Secretary. A suspension of arms supplies would demonstrate unequivocal compliance with the Arms Trade Treaty and with international norms regarding the protection of civilians in conflict.

The Methodist Conference further invited the Methodist people to pray for the effective alleviation of the humanitarian suffering of the Yemeni people, for an international independent inquiry into the allegations of possible war crimes committed on all sides and for peace talks managed under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Conference therefore accepted the memorial.

The letter directed has been sent. It is therefore considered that the specific directions of the memorial are complete.

4. Memorial M11 (2018): Ecumenical constitutions for united areas

...the Conference accepted the second request of the memorial and directed the Methodist Council to ensure in consultation with the Methodist members of the Liaison Group that the model constitution is finalised and available for use ...as a matter of urgency.

This work has been done, and it is therefore considered that the direction of the memorial is complete.

*****RESOLUTION**

23/1. The Council receives the report.