The United Reformed Church's response to antisemitism and to issues arising from the relationship and conflicts between Israel and Palestine: an overview

Antisemitism: summary of URC position

The United Reformed Church (URC) is unequivocal in standing against all forms of antisemitism.

The United Reformed Church acknowledges the deplorable history of Christian antisemitism and the role that the URC and its antecedent denominations have played in that history. The URC is committed to countering the ongoing influence of antisemitic tropes in its communal life and to working with organisations like the Woolf Institute in Cambridge and The Council for Christians and Jews (CCJ) to embed theologies and practices that bring to light antisemitism in our midst.

The URC has stood by local communities impacted by antisemitic actions (including the terror attack against the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation in October 2025 and subsequent attacks against Hatzola ambulances, Finchley Reform Synagogue, and in Golders Green). It has offered prayers and fully recognised the implications of such actions for Jewish communities around the UK.

(See.Faith.leaders.stand.by.Jewish.community._.United.Reformed.Church?8_Oct_8❶. URC.stands.in.prayerful.solidarity.after.arson.attack.on.ambulances._.United.Reformed.Church?89_March_8❷.›Arm.in.arm".with.Finchley.Jewish.community._.United.Reformed.Church?7❸_April_8❷)

Israel and Palestine: summary of URC position

The URC is unequivocally committed to listening to those directly impacted in the conflict in Israel and Palestine, and standing in solidarity alongside Christians in the region. Prayers were published in an immediate response to the terror attacks and taking of hostages on 7 October 2023, and the URC was party to statements issued by Christians Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) following the terror attack on Bondi Beach, 14 December 2025.

We have drawn attention to acts of injustice in the Holy Land, and continue to do so, as we do with acts of injustice throughout the world, with special emphasis on confronting injustices in Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Central America, and Ukraine through our global justice programme.

While critical of some policies and actions of the Israeli government, and while supportive of the World Council of Churches' June 2025 statement (2025 General Assembly, Resolution 42 – see p.23), the URC emphasises that these are policies and actions of a government. The URC does not conflate the Israeli government with Jewish communities in Israel and around the world.

In June 2026, the United Reformed Church, alongside its world justice programme Commitment for Life, joined the cross-denominational Just Peace Coalition – a collection of agencies, Church denominations and networks working together "to see a just peace for all who call the Holy Land home". The coalition's work is guided by Palestinian partners and grounded in their perspectives, priorities and lived experience. The Just Peace Coalition is committed to campaigning for the foreseeable future, "until there is a Just Peace for all who call the Holy Land home". See Home - Just Peace Coalition for further information.

Acting against antisemitism

The URC's approach has never been theoretical; the issues have never been engaged with at arm's length. Rather, the URC has consistently taken time to visit, and listen to, Jewish representatives, both in the UK and in the Holy Land.

The URC denounced all acts of antisemitism and Islamophobia in the UK (2024 General Assembly, Resolutions 41&42 – see p.25) and encouraged local URC churches and synods "to reach out in friendship and welcome to their local faith communities", and to develop deeper awareness on the underlying issues shaping and feeding the crisis in Israel and Palestine.

In 2021, the URC's General Assembly resolved, within a raft of ten resolutions (see pp.14-16; 26-27), to "recognise and affirm Israel as a country within the international community of States with rights and responsibilities". Since then, the URC has continued to affirm and support The Council for Christians and Jews and to strengthen relations with the Board of Deputies of British Jews in response to that resolution.

The URC has helped fund, and participated in at its most senior level, Jewish-Christian dialogue efforts organised by CCJ, including a Holocaust education trip to Auschwitz with CCJ and study tours to Israel and the West Bank to hear a range of perspectives from the region.

We work diligently to deepen our inter faith relations through the work of our URC Inter Faith Enabling Group and through relations between local synods, congregations and church leaders with synagogues and local rabbis.

Resolutions and debates relating to Israel and Palestine

The URC's 2021 resolution (above) built on ongoing debates and decisions, in particular the General Assembly's 2016 instruction to its Mission Committee "to explore and develop further our existing work around the issues of the Israel/Palestine situation with indigenous churches, interfaith and ecumenical partners and public authorities, including:

- dialogue and action;
- peace building;
- justice and security for all; in order to enable synods, local churches and individuals to become more aware and to respond with informed prayer, grace and solidarity."

The Mission Committee reported to the General Assembly again in 2023 (see pp.147-9) to demonstrate the substantive ways in which it had responded to the 2021 resolutions. The committee reaffirmed the URC's condemnation of all acts of violence in Israel and Palestine. It recognised that understanding the root causes of that violence is critical and had therefore supported a CCJ visit to Israel and Palestine that included bishops, ministers, rabbis, and Muslims via our Interfaith Fund.

The URC's General Assembly response in 2024 to the October 2023 attacks on Israeli citizens, including the holding of hostages, was equally balanced and measured. It resolved that "Hamas and all those responsible should be held accountable in accordance with international law" (2024 General Assembly, Resolution 37 – see p.24). The General Assembly likewise denounced "the deadly attacks on Palestinian civilians in Gaza by the Israeli Defence Force, and its devastating destruction of civilian infrastructure", again appealing to accountability "in accordance with international law" (Resolution 38 – see p.24).

Position on investments

The General Assembly in 2024 also passed Resolution 45 – see pp.25-6: "In the light of the continuing and worsening breaches of international law in relation to the settlements, forced house demolitions and the acquisition of land by coercion in the occupied Palestinian territory, General Assembly requests that URC Synod Trusts and the URC Trusts and Pensions Funds avoid knowingly investing in Israeli registered

companies until such time as Israel once again abides by international law in respect of its obligations towards the Palestinian territory."

Since that resolution was passed, Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) Investment Management Limited has divested its NICE Systems* shareholding, so the URC no longer has any investment in Israeli registered companies.

(*NICE Systems is an information technology consultancy company)