

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
COMPASSION, PEACE AND JUSTICE
PRESBYTERIAN MINISTRY AT THE UNITED NATIONS



June 20, 2018

VIA FAX: (212) 415-4162

H. E. Mrs. Nikki R. Haley
United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations
United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Your Excellency,

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a long history in the global community. Our denomination has been involved with the United Nations since its formation in 1945. Since 1989, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has held special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council. Our office, Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, acts on behalf of the Church to connect Presbyterians to global discipleship for compassion, justice and peace in the world through our engagement with the United Nations.

Therefore, yesterday's announcement that the United States decided to withdraw from the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) is regrettable. Moreover, we are disheartened as this news comes on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNHR), a landmark, historic document in moral consciousness that has been a beacon of hope and purpose throughout the world. UDHR was drafted to articulate "the rights and freedoms to which every human being is equally and inalienably entitled." (UNHR) As members of the Abrahamic faiths, we affirm the value of human dignity that all human beings are created equally in the "image and likeness of God."

We believe that protecting human rights is essential to our democracy, for upholding human dignity, and the flourishing of our world. The HRC provides a forum to fight against human rights abuses around the world. You stated that HRC is a "body of bias against U.S. ally Israel and a failure to hold human rights abusers accountable." Reform is necessary. However, the HRC has also played important roles in North Korea, Syria, Myanmar and South Sudan.

We urge the United States to work together with other member states and to rejoin the world body of which the United States is one member. In Christian scripture, we have an image of membership in a single organization, as we are joined as members of the body of Christ (Romans 12:5). We urge the United States to work towards reforms that make for a more effective forum to promote and protect human rights.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a historic commitment to human rights and our faith in Jesus Christ calls us to stand for rights of all people in accordance with God's wish for humanity. While we recognize the sins of our past, the United States has worked to stand as a beacon of human rights around the world, this decision removes us from that important global position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ryan D. Smith".

Ryan D. Smith
Director & Representative to the United Nations
Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)