



The Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

Support for the Recognition of a Palestinian State

In acknowledgement and response to a statement made on the 27th of September 2025, by our Foreign Minister Winston Peters who said that New Zealand will not recognise a Palestinian state at this time, pointing to ongoing conflict, uncertainty over future governance, and a Hamas presence in Gaza. Recognition of statehood is not just a symbolic act, it is a recognition of the rights of a people under occupation. Delaying recognition suggests the government is prioritising strategic caution over universal human rights. Aotearoa New Zealand has historically positioned itself in foreign affairs with a degree of moral diplomacy—nuclear-free status, advocating human rights, supporting international law. Delaying or refusing recognition of a Palestinian state in the current global context should be seen as diverging from that tradition. The government argues that recognition now might “reward” or embolden Hamas, complicating peace efforts. But there is counter-argument that recognition could instead increase pressure on all parties towards negotiation, and lend weight to international law standards.

Within Aotearoa, public sentiment (especially among younger/marginalised people) tends toward seeing recognition of Palestinian statehood as a moral imperative and long overdue. The government’s reluctance in this matter continues to breed disillusionment and/or accusations of moral cowardice. If the government truly believes in the principle of self-determination and in a two-state solution, it needs to show that through action—as well as words. Recognition of a Palestinian state is not simply emblematic—it is an important piece in the architecture of peace; the government’s current stance may miss an important opportunity to contribute meaningfully towards that architecture.

For us as Methodist Christians, the delay in recognising Palestine as a state is a failure to embody the prophetic witness the Church is called to bear—standing with the marginalised and affirming the God-given humanity of all peoples. Recognition is not a reward for power structures, but a statement of faith in peace through justice. Aotearoa’s moral legacy calls for bold compassion, not pragmatic silence. We must not wait for the perfect conditions to affirm what is right. Let us hear the prophetic words of a Christian Palestinian Children’s Prayer for Gaza, which sings of freedom that must be proclaimed—even amid darkness. *“The sun of freedom will rise even if there were a hundred Herods. Tell them the sun of freedom will rise. Our land will return to us.”*

Ngā manaakitanga,

Te Aroha Rountree

Te Aroha Rountree

President - Methodist Church of New Zealand | Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

President – Perēhitini

Te Aroha Rountree
PO Box 931
Ōtautahi / Christchurch 8140
M: (027) 5353 521
E: president@methodist.org.nz

Vice President – Perēhitini Tuarua

Rev Peter Norman
PO Box 931
Ōtautahi / Christchurch 8140
M: (027) 378 7042
E: vicepresident@methodist.org.nz

Secretary – Hekeretari

Rev Tara Tautari
PO Box 931
Ōtautahi / Christchurch 8140
T: (03) 366 6049, ext 824
M: (021) 062 0466
E: tarat@methodist.org.nz