



## Participating Organizations

Alexandria for Palestine  
 Alliance of Baptists  
 American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)  
 American Muslims for Palestine (AMP)  
 Appalachian Peace Education Center (APEC)  
 Arab American Association of Central Virginia  
 Central Atlantic Conference (UCC) Palestine/Israel Network  
 Defenders for Freedom, Justice, and Equality  
 Episcopal Peace Fellowship—National Capital Regional Chapter  
 Israel Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church – USA (IPMN)  
 Here4TheKids  
 Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP)  
 National Arab American Women's Association (NAAWA)  
 New Dominion PAC  
 Northern Virginians for Peace & Justice  
 Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace (PCAP)  
 Plowshares Peace & Justice Center  
 Richmonders for Peace in Israel-Palestine (RPIP)  
 Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East, Northern Virginia Chapter  
 United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR)  
 US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR)  
 Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace (WIAMEP)

## VCHR Urges General Assembly to Reject SB830

The Virginia Coalition for Human Rights (VCHR) calls on the Virginia General Assembly to reject **SB830 – “Official terminology for certain geographic locations,”** which would prohibit any official Virginia government communication from using the term “West Bank” and would instead require that area of Palestine to be referred to as “Judea and Samaria.” This dangerous censorship of geographic terminology is a blatant effort to erase Palestine from the map and normalize the illegal Israeli settlements and land theft, ethnic cleansing, and genocide against the Palestinian people. The Israeli government and its proxies should not be allowed to push such bigoted anti-Palestinian legislation in several US states, including Virginia, to restrict what terminology may be used by American state and local governments.

The General Assembly should reject SB830 for the following reasons:

1. It would be offensive, racist, and discriminatory against Palestinians and Palestinian-Americans to prohibit the legally correct terminology referencing the geographic area of their Palestinian ancestry and heritage, effectively erasing a legal reference to part of their original homeland.
2. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has unequivocally ruled that the West Bank part of Palestine remains occupied territory under international law and that Israeli settlements violate the Fourth Geneva Convention. In 2024 the ICJ reaffirmed that Israel's prolonged occupation and settlement expansion are unlawful, that Israel has no sovereign claim to occupied Palestinian land, and that Israel must end its illegal occupation and colonization of Palestine and provide reparations.
3. Using this invalid terminology would make the Virginia government complicit in violating international law by empowering the ethnic cleansing of Palestine and renaming it according to the whim of the occupier.
4. Even if this terminology was valid, which it isn't, it is not within the purview of the Virginia General Assembly to insert itself into international affairs.
5. It is a violation of US and Virginia sovereignty for Israel and its proxies to dictate what terminology may or may not be used in official Virginia government communications.

The term “Judea and Samaria” has no basis in international law and is used by the Zionist Project/Israel to normalize its ethnic cleansing and genocide against the Palestinian people. **Accordingly, we urge the General Assembly to reject SB830.**

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***The Virginia Coalition for Human Rights (VCHR) is a broadly based grass-roots coalition that advocates for Palestinian human rights. We support and defend universal human rights, equity, free speech (including the right to boycott) and academic freedom. We believe that the attainment of human rights, equal rights, and civil rights, requires an open and free debate, and we object to any efforts to curtail or forestall such debate by placing limits on free speech or academic freedom. We oppose all types of racism, oppression, and violations of international law wherever they occur; and we also oppose hate speech, and any type of discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, or national origin, wherever it may occur, domestically or abroad. We celebrate our diversity and strongly oppose any manifestation of racism against anyone. <https://vchr.org/>.***