

01-GS-39 VOTED: The Twenty-third General Synod adopts the resolution “To End The Presence of the United States Navy in the Municipality of Vieques, Puerto Rico.”

TO END THE PRESENCE OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF VIEQUES, PUERTO RICO

To end by peaceful efforts the United States Navy bombing of Vieques and to compel immediately its exit from the island municipality, the Twenty-third General Synod:

calls on the President of the United States to support and facilitate the implementation of the four areas recommended by the 1999 First Commission of Vieques: (1) immediate demilitarization of Vieques, (2) initiate an ecological recovery and cleanup program, (3) return back to Puerto Rico the land on Vieques illegally appropriated from 1936–1941, and (4) provide means for an economic recovery of the island, which was endorsed by the majority of the people of Vieques and Puerto Rico, and calls upon the federal government for the immediate release of those imprisoned for civil disobedience protests against the United States bombing in Vieques, and calls upon the U.S. government to cease making Vieques available to other nation’s military forces;

calls on the United Church of Christ Conferences to immediately initiate a letter campaign to the President of the United States and members of Congress requesting the immediate end of the United States Navy bombing of Vieques, to compel immediately the United States Navy’s exit from the island municipality, to immediately initiate the environmental cleanup of the island municipality and surrounding waters, and to initiate an Action Alert Program on Vieques to assist the members of its local churches to monitor the positions taken by members of the United States Congress about Vieques;

urges that Justice and Witness Ministries delegate to the Public Life and Social Policy Ministry and the Human Rights, Justice for Women, and Transformation Ministry Team the responsibility to assist the Conferences and other bodies of the United Church of Christ in the implementation of this resolution;

calls on Local Church Ministries to work with local United Church of Christ congregations and all other church settings to engage in education, prayerful solidarity, and advocacy to end the bombing;

calls on the Wider Church Ministries to use their worldwide resources to alert nations who join United States military practices and maneuvers about their complicity with ecological environment damages, poor health conditions, and economic scarcity of the residents of Vieques, making those nations aware of the risk their troops carry by the depleted uranium and other toxic materials utilized in Vieques;

calls on the Office of General Ministries to monitor the progress of this resolution and initiate joint efforts with other United States denominations towards similar goals; and

calls on the Council for Hispanic Ministries and the Hispanic Ministries Implementation Team to receive reports from the Covenanted Ministries mandated to address the issue of Vieques and report to the Twenty-fourth General Synod.

Funding for this action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.