

DON'T BE FOOLED BY BDS PROPAGANDA

Lisa Barzel

BDS, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel, wants you to believe that they are a human rights movement. Israel is accused of being a colonial state when in fact Jews lived in Israel and in Arab countries for centuries before the creation of Islam. When the Jewish State of Israel was created in 1948, more than 850,000 Jews were forced to flee by Arab governments in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Morocco and several other Arab countries. They left their homes, property and valued belongings, my husband's family among them. Jews who fled Arab countries are not allowed to return and have no ability to recover their property; unlike in Israel where 26.5% of Israelis are non-Jews (Arabs, Muslims, Druze, Christians, Bahai) with full rights of citizenship including representation in the government.

The actual aim of BDS is the elimination of the Jewish State of Israel.

Leadership of Hamas and Hezbollah have chosen to keep the Palestinians in poverty and use civilians, women and children as human shields in the current war.

They have refused to make peace because the ultimate aim is to destroy Israel.

I encourage you to question BDS and learn more about the region beyond the anti-Israel narrative. It's important to also know the history of the Jewish people who lived in Arab countries.

As a result of ongoing antisemitism, Jews are once again feeling unsafe in Europe and even in the US. Go beyond the social media headlines and propaganda. Educate yourself about the history of the region and how Palestinians have become victims of their own leadership. Learn why Jews needed a Jewish State and how it has become so important to Western democracies in sharing the fight against terrorism. After the Holocaust and

WWII, Israel was one of the only places that Jews could go and feel free to practice their religion.

Opposition to the Arab Boycott and BDS are long-standing American positions. The recent passing of Jimmy Carter is a reminder that, as President, he signed the Israel Anti-Arab Boycott Act of 1977, which prohibited American companies from cooperating with the Arab boycott.

Israel continues to be a haven for Jews and others. It is a role model for democracy, especially during these times of increased antisemitism.

Lisa Barzel, Treasurer
Suncoast Jewish Alliance
January 1, 2025