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Website menu sections separated by headings in **RED**.

12 Dec. 2020

BDS Toolkit

Resisting Apartheid & Racism

Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions:

Time-tested Economic Tools
as non-violent actions against
Israeli human rights abuses

HOME PAGE

HELLO!

WELCOME!

Every advocacy group is unique to its own setting, but it is our hope that you will be able to find what you need here in this toolkit. You will find a collection of experience, knowledge, and important success stories of many who have patiently and faithfully pursued the goals of justice and peace for Palestine.

[EXPLORE \[link\]](#)

BDS IS A UNIQUE WITNESS

This toolkit is a resource developed by Global Kairos for Justice, a network that emerged from the Kairos Palestine conference held in Bethlehem in 2018 which was a follow up to the 2009 groundbreaking document, Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth. The 2009 document was a cry for solidarity in the struggle for justice; it came from Palestinian Christians and addressed all other Christians around the world. It followed and was in support of the 2005 Palestinian civil society call for economic actions, or “BDS” (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) against Israel.

At its meeting in December 2019, Global Kairos for Justice commissioned this BDS Toolkit, for the purposes of providing important information and educating people about why economic actions are needed to make

change in Israel's record of human rights violations against Palestine. Since the "BDS Movement" is faced with intense opposition globally, this toolkit aims to let justice-seeking people working for Palestinian rights know that they do not walk this road alone. BDS is a tactic; a means to an end. It offers a unique and distinct witness through time-honored, non-violent tools and actions, calling for justice for Palestinians and Palestine.

BDS STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

READ STORIES [\[link\]](#)

GALLERY

CONTACT US

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Have a question or need help?

Want to share your story?

BDS TOOLKIT OF GLOBAL KAIROS

contact@bdstoolkit.org

CONNECT WITH US AND EACH OTHER ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!

[\[link to Global Kairos FB page\]](#)

ABOUT US

GLOBAL KAIROS FOR JUSTICE

Global Kairos for Justice, a worldwide coalition of concerned Christians from different churches, traditions and church-related organizations born in response to Kairos Palestine's 2009 call in *Moment of Truth: a word of faith, hope, and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering*. We are committed to nonviolent means, calling for and end to the Israeli colonization of Palestine. We advocate for the right of self-determination of Palestinian people and a peace with justice for all people in the holy land.

Today, Kairos movements exist in many countries in the Global South as well as in the Global North. The international movement is dependent on a committee in which Kairos Palestine plays the significant role of facilitating and coordinating the various committees' tasks of looking at theological and political rhetoric, exchanging information, unifying advocacy strategies and suggesting activities that take into consideration the specificity of each country deriving from the Kairos concept of acting now for justice.

Sign the Global Kairos Signature Campaign

NOTES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SPELLING OF ANTISEMITISM

We have chosen to use this spelling: antisemitism - without a hyphen and with a lower case "s". Both The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and Jewish Voice for Peace use this spelling.

According to IHRA, the hyphenated spelling with a capital S "allows for the possibility of something called 'Semitism', which not only legitimizes a form of pseudo-scientific racial classification that was thoroughly discredited by association with Nazi ideology, but also divides the term, stripping it from its meaning of opposition and hatred toward Jews. ...The unhyphenated spelling is favored by many scholars and institutions in order to dispel the idea that there is an entity 'Semitism' which 'anti-Semitism' opposes. Antisemitism should be read as a unified term so that the meaning of the generic term for modern Jew-hatred is clear."

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Why BDS

[Text for all 3 tabs in dropdown menu]

1. THEOLOGY TAB

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF BDS SOLIDARITY

Jesus said, "Come, follow me..." ~ Matthew 4:19.

The BDS Movement is an invitation to accompaniment and solidarity; a call to non-cooperation with a racist agenda. It is a call to walk as Jesus walked. Here are 10 ways to follow Jesus and demonstrate costly solidarity with Palestinians in their struggle for justice and freedom:

- Thou shalt practice absolute commitment to non-violence.
 - Thou shalt be steadfast and practice sumud.
 - Thou shalt love your enemies.
 - Thou shalt challenge discrimination based on identity.
 - Thou shalt reject normalization of Israel's narrative and monopoly.
 - Thou shalt speak out against lies and propaganda.
 - Thou shalt criticize in love in the prophetic tochecha tradition.
 - Thou shalt prioritize people before profits.
 - Thou shalt not covet your neighbor's land.
 - Thou shalt be blessed when you are persecuted for justice sake.
-

RATIONALE FOR 10 COMMANDMENTS OF BDS SOLIDARITY

1. THOU SHALT PRACTICE ABSOLUTE COMMITMENT TO NON-VIOLENCE.

The Lord tests the righteous and the wicked,
and God's soul hates the lover of violence. ~Psalm 11:5

BDS is a means to an end, not an end in itself. It calls for change through age-old nonviolent tactics that have been practiced through history by many peoples around the world.

- Contrary to common criticisms, BDS is not "violence against Jews," because it does not target Jews. It targets actions not people.
- BDS has been demonized as a threat to Israel but it is in fact a threat to the unfair status quo and the principalities of unjust powers.

2. THOU SHALT BE STEADFAST IN SOLIDARITY AND PRACTICE SUMUD.

Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. ~1 Corinthians 15:58

The Arabic word sumud means perseverance and resilience. In the Palestinian context, it has come to mean steadfastness in the face of oppression. (read more on Palestinian sumud).

- Take lessons from the sumud of Palestinians and persevere in your solidarity in the face of attacks on your work for Palestinian rights.
- Just as Palestinians aren't staying on their lands, we need to be in the struggle for the long haul. BDS is a "politics of erosion"; it is slow-acting and takes time and patience, working to wear out those who abuse their power.
- In The Parable of the Persistent Widow, Jesus taught his disciples to always pray and not give up. The widow's persistence paid off with her receiving justice from the unjust judge. (Luke 18)

3. THOU SHALT LOVE YOUR ENEMIES.

I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven... ~ Matthew 5

- Jesus of Nazareth said: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy,' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven..." (Matthew 5). These words turned cultural norms upside down. Who are one's enemies? If one is told to love enemies and pray for persecutors, who is there left to hate and dispossess? The whole premise of BDS is about flipping societal norms and expectations for the purpose of revealing the justice of the Realm of God.
- Kairos Palestine on resistance: KP4.2.3: We say that our option as Christians in the face of the Israeli occupation is to resist. Resistance is a right and a duty for the Christian. But it is resistance with love as its logic. It is thus a creative resistance for it must find human ways that engage the humanity of the enemy. Seeing the image of God in the face of the enemy means taking up positions in the light of this vision of active resistance to stop the injustice and oblige the perpetrator to end his aggression and thus achieve the desired goal, which is getting back the land, freedom, dignity and independence.

4. THOU SHALT CHALLENGE DISCRIMINATION BASED ON IDENTITY.

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ~ Galatians 3:28

Israel has different laws for different ethnicities and religions.

- Israel is engaged in apartheid based on identity which is racist.
- Discriminating against people based on their religion or identity is unacceptable.
- BDS is an anti-racist movement and challenges Israeli discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, race, etc.

This is an important passage from Matthew 15:

"Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith!"

Whether we like to admit it or not, even Jesus got caught in a moment of discrimination, but he caught himself. Jesus declared that he was sent only to “the House of Israel.” As a result, when a Canaanite woman asked for help, he compared her to a dog. The Canaanite woman called him out for his cultural bias and discrimination, Jesus caught himself in doing that and told the woman her faith was great, thus praising her for her courage and faith.

BDS seeks to overcome cultural bias and discrimination by calling it out as the Canaanite woman did with Jesus. Even Jesus, by acknowledging she was right, was able to overcome the challenge of societal discrimination and bias.

5. THOU SHALT REJECT NORMALIZATION OF ISRAEL’S NARRATIVE AND MONOPOLY.

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. ~ 2 Chronicles 7:14

Reject the notion that there is only one narrative. Israel’s claim to the land presumes God as a real estate agent. The land is God’s and all the people’s. Israel insists that they should have a monopoly on the land.

BDS opposes and challenges the following:

- God as real estate agent
- Israel’s monopoly of the narrative
- Israel’s monopoly of the land

6. THOU SHALT SPEAK OUT AGAINST LIES AND PROPAGANDA.

They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. “Peace, peace,” they say, when there is no peace. Are they ashamed of their detestable conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush... ~Jeremiah 8:11-12

- “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” The Ninth Commandment, Exodus 20:16 Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann* speaks against bearing false witness in defense of truth, saying the Old Testament commandment urges “members of the covenant community not to distort reality to each other. The major pertinence of the prohibition in our society is the collapse of truth into propaganda in the service of ideology.” Brueggemann warns that “public versions of truth are not committed to a portrayal of reality, but to a rendering that serves a partisan interest...” Further, he reminds us that no one is exempt from this, especially religious leaders who are “tempted to deception which both advances institutional interests and seeks to give credence to theological claims (Jeremiah 6:13-14: 8:10-11). [*The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary, Volume I, Exodus.]
- Hasbara / Propaganda normalizes the unfair and unjust status quo. BDS Challenges Israel's Hasbara. (Hebrew for propaganda).
- Challenge the silence of the post-holocaust theology which Jewish theologian Marc Ellis has called “The Ecumenical Deal,” and agreement by Christians not to criticize Israel in exchange for forgiveness for the sins of the holocaust.
 - In the same way that the Ecumenical Deal is wrong, silence today on the human rights abuses of Israel is a false witness.

7. THOU SHALT CRITICIZE IN LOVE, IN THE PROPHETIC TRADITION.

Thou shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, so so you will not share in their guilt. ~ Leviticus 19:17

- Resist with love as your logic. Be strong and practice tough love.

- Do Tochecha at the risk of defamation.

The sacred duty of tochecha, sacred rebuke in Hebrew, is found in the Holiness Code (Lev 19:17) in the Hebrew scriptures. It is incumbent upon those working for justice to be true to this tradition and call out immoral and unethical behavior. In a sermon at St. John's Presbyterian Church in San Francisco, Rabbi Alissa Wise of Jewish Voice for Peace says,

Tochecha is about our obligation to tell someone when they have done or are currently straying and behaving wrongly – whether to us, or to another. What's more, tochecha requires us also to engage with those we are rebuking and assist them and support them in the repair of the wrong you are calling out.

In a later sermon, Rabbi Wise teaches "I can think of no greater act of friendship than to risk defamation in order to remind one's friends of their own ideals when they, themselves, have forgotten them. That is tochecha—sacred rebuke."

8. THOU SHALT SHOW CONCERN AND PUT PEOPLE BEFORE PROFITS.

Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is not this to know me? says the Lord. But your eyes and heart are only on you dishonest gain, for shedding innocent blood, and for practicing oppression and violence. ~

Jeremiah 22: 15-17

- Challenge companies who profit from human rights abuses.
- Stewardship of resources calls for more than having a "Clean Hands" policy; scripture calls for bringing about change where profits come before people.
- In the Parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus, as told by Jesus of Nazareth (Luke 16:19-31), the rich man who oppressed Lazarus in his lifetime asks God to send Lazarus to warn the rich man's brothers about their oppressive behavior before it was too late. God replied: "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced, even if someone rises from the dead." BDS is proactive social action that does not wait for eyes to open. Rather, it seeks to turn over the tables of abusive power and wealth so that those who oppress others see and understand, in ways they were not previously able to comprehend.

9. THOU SHALT APPLY JUSTICE UNIVERSALLY.

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it; the world, and all who live in it. ~ Psalm 24:1

- Work for a liberation of all peoples. All people deserve dignity and freedom.
- Do not make exceptions when it comes to freedom and justice.
- BDS is in line with all liberation movements and does not call for exceptions.
- The Bible calls for Jubilee, a liberation for all through: Release, Remission, Rest and Return:
- Jubilee, or the year of release, comes every 50 years, according to the Leviticus. It is to be set aside as a year of emancipation and restoration of God's will. As a biblical mandate, Leviticus 25 speaks of restoring justice. We are to release people from their debts, release the captive, and return property to those who owned it so they can enjoy the fruits of their land.
- The book of Ezekiel, regarded as an early holiness code, refers to a year of liberty during which property is returned to the original owner.
- Jesus of Nazareth announced his public ministry in his hometown synagogue by reading these words from Isaiah "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captive and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to proclaim the year of Jubilee." By the end of the conversation that ensued, Jesus' own hometown community wanted to throw him off a cliff for calling for justice in

this way. The justice of Jubilee, and of BDS, challenges unfair status quo that cannot abide radical societal change for the sake of those who are oppressed and suffer the most. Even biblical Jubilee was rejected in the context of such radical a faith. BDS is about justice and jubilee.

10. THOU SHALT BE BLESSED WHEN THOU ARE PERSECUTED FOR JUSTICE SAKE.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ~ Matthew 5: 10-11

Challenge the powerful in an organized way.

- There is safety in numbers
 - Do justice in community; build a community.
 - As in the story of Nehemiah 5 in which people complained about being enslaved, Nehemiah calls the community together for strength and turns their focus to a broader message of doing justice together.
 - Find partners in the struggle.
 - Partner with other justice struggles, e.g., climate, hunger, women's rights, etc. Ask for help when needed and give help when asked.
- Blow-back will come. Expect attacks and be prepared for them.

CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY FOR BDS

Some denominations and organizations have taken actions for BDS or other economic measures. Others are in campaigns supporting or studying the call from Palestinian civil society or through the Kairos Palestine document for boycott, divestment and sanctions.

SEE LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS ([link](#))

PALESTINIAN CALLS FOR JUSTICE - IN THEIR OWN VOICES

FROM THE PALESTINIAN CIVIL SOCIETY CALL - 2005

Given that all forms of international intervention and peace-making have until now failed to convince or force Israel to comply with humanitarian law, to respect fundamental human rights and to end its occupation and oppression of the people of Palestine... We, representatives of Palestinian civil society, call upon international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era. We appeal to you to pressure your respective states to impose embargoes and sanctions against Israel. We also invite Israelis to support this Call, for the sake of justice and genuine peace. [read more](#)

FROM THE AMMAN CALL - WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, 2008

The Palestinian Christians from Gaza to Jerusalem and to Nazareth, have called out to their brothers and sisters in Christ with this urgent plea: “Enough is enough. No more words without deeds, It is time for action.” Together we will act and pray and speak and work and risk reputations and lives to build with you bridges for an enduring peace among the peoples of this tortured and beautiful place—Palestine and Israel—to end these decades of injustice, humiliation and insecurity, to end the decades of living as refugees and under occupation. We will work with you to seek peace and pursue it. We have allowed too much time to pass. Time has not served the cause of peace but has served the cause of extremism. This is our urgent cause that cannot wait.

[read more](#)

FROM KAIROS PALESTINE, A MOMENT OF TRUTH - 2009

We, a group of Christian Palestinians, after prayer, reflection and an exchange of opinion, cry out from within the suffering in our country, under the Israeli occupation, with a cry of hope in the absence of all hope, a cry full of prayer and faith in a God ever vigilant, in God’s divine providence for all the inhabitants of this land... We ask our sister Churches not to offer a theological cover-up for the injustice we suffer, for the sin of the occupation imposed upon us. Our question to our brothers and sisters in the Churches today is: Are you able to help us get our freedom back, for this is the only way you can help the two peoples attain justice, peace, security and love? ... Our word to the international community is to stop the principle of “double standards” and insist on the international resolutions regarding the Palestinian problem with regard to all parties... In the absence of all hope, we cry out our cry of hope. We believe in God, good and just. We believe that God’s goodness will finally triumph over the evil of hate and death that still persist in our land. We will see here “a new land” and “a new human being”, capable of rising up in the spirit to love each one of his or her brothers and sisters.

[read more](#)

FROM NCCOP OPEN LETTER - THE NATIONAL COALITION OF CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS IN PALESTINE - 2017

As we meet this month in Bethlehem in occupied Palestine, we are still suffering from 100 years of injustice and oppression that were inflicted on the Palestinian people beginning with the unjust and unlawful Balfour declaration, intensified through the Nakba and the influx of refugees, followed by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank including East Jerusalem and Gaza and the fragmentation of our people and our land through policies of isolation and confiscation of land, and the building of Jewish-only settlements and the Apartheid Wall... Things are beyond urgent. We are on the verge of catastrophic collapse. The current status-quo is unsustainable. This could be our last chance to achieve a just peace. As a Palestinian Christian community, this could be our last opportunity to save the Christian presence in this land. Our only hope as Christians comes from the fact that in Jerusalem, the city of God, and our city, there is an empty tomb, and Jesus Christ who triumphed over death and sin, brought to us and to all humanity, new life.

[read more](#)

RATIONALE FOR BDS

SUMMARY FOR THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

Available in full length for download below, David Wildman's paper outlines a theological foundation for BDS. The paper is entitled What Does the Lord Require of the Ecumenical Movement Today? Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions as Nonviolent, Loving Actions. David Wildman serves as the Executive Secretary for Middle East, Human Rights & Racial Justice, Global Ministries for the United Methodist Church.

Executive Secretary Wildman does the necessary work of grounding the BDS movement in Biblical theology. The BDS movement is diverse; it is both secular and religious. Even while Christians work shoulder to shoulder with secular partners, it is important for people of faith to lift up their purpose and reasoning for continuing their work through a theological framework.

We find our theology to be a source of inspiration for joining together with those of many different narratives, as opposed to being a cause for division. Even within the churches of which Wildman speaks, there has been tremendous division among people of faith on the topic at hand. But the passages cited in this paper, and the ways they connect to the actual work and witness of the faithful, can provide a useful model for moving forward to seek and achieve justice for all Palestinians.

In his opening paragraph, Executive Secretary Wildman points out how far-reaching the BDS Movement has become since its beginning in 2005: "The movement now includes universities, trade unions, human rights organizations, churches, municipal governments and even some corporations as well as countless grassroots community groups and individuals."

He goes on to explain that many churches in the United States "have issued statements and denominational resolutions...to support a two-state solution." Then he points out very clearly, "Yet only with the rise of the BDS movement have US churches begun to examine the "log in our own eye" of economic complicity with ongoing Israeli settlement expansion and systematic discrimination and dispossession against Palestinians."

Wildman offers an informative history of the beginning of the BDS Movement, along with important scripture passages that offer the reader the means for understanding justice work and advocacy from one's Christian perspective.

Scripture supporting support of the BDS Movement:

Romans 14:15:

If your brother or sister is being injured by what you consume, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you consume cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died.

1 John 3:17-18:

How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in work or speech, but in truth and action.

James 1:25:

But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

Romans 12:21:

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 14:16:

So do not let your good be spoken of as evil.

Ezekiel 18:31-32:

Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, Oh House of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!

Revelation 18:2a, 4a:

Fallen, Fallen is Babylon the Great!... Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins."

The above scriptures provide an important framework for the meaningful and informative discussion about justice theology and the BDS movement. Executive Secretary Wildman concludes with these thoughts:

More than anything, we in the churches need to stay on message that the BDS movement is a nonviolent moral movement to end longstanding suffering of the Palestinian people at the hands of a discriminatory system that continues daily to seize more and more land... It's time for global churches to stop whitewashing racism by joining the BDS movement... When we boycott injustice we express our love for Palestinian sisters and brothers, for Israelis, and for ourselves.

Read the entire paper below.

[Download file for full length paper written by David Wildman.](#)

2. SOLIDARITY TAB

BACKGROUND

NOTE

Some of these denominations and organizations have taken actions or called for some form of boycott, mainly of settlements products and services, and/or divestment measures. Others are in campaigns supporting or studying the call from Kairos Palestine and from Palestinian civil society for boycott, divestment and sanctions.

CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS AND DENOMINATIONS IN SOLIDARITY PALESTINE

Thousands of Palestinian Christians, signatories of "Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth"
Kairos Palestine
Global Kairos for Justice
National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine
Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center Christian Peacemaker Teams, Palestine
Joint Advocacy Initiative

IN SOLIDARITY

AROUND THE WORLD

Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum of the World Council of Churches
World Council of Churches Central Committee
Christian Peacemakers Teams
Pax Christi International
World Communion of Reformed Churches

NORTH AMERICA:

Palestine Christian Alliance for Peace (USA)
The United Methodist Church: United Methodist Church and Society
United Methodist Pension and Health Benefits
The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
The United Church of Christ
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
The Episcopal Church
The Alliance of Baptists
Mennonite Church (USA)
Mennonite Central Committee (USA)
American Friends Service Committee (Quakers)
Friends Fiduciary Corporation (Quakers)
Methodist Federation for Social Action
National Executive Council of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship
National Coalition of American Nuns
Mercy Investment Program
Conference of Major Superiors of Men (Roman Catholic Church)
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
US Dominican Palestine Coordinating Committee (Roman Catholic Church)
Society of Friends (Quakers) across the USA—Numerous Yearly Meetings, regional actions
The United Church of Canada
Anglican Church of Canada
Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

EUROPE:

The Methodist Church of Britain
The Church of England
Quakers of Great Britain
Justice and Peace Commission (Catholic, UK)
The Church of Ireland
Christian Aid (UK and Ireland)

The Church of Sweden
Quaker Council for European Affairs
Hilfswerk de Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz
Keerpunt (Netherlands)
Norwegian Church Aid
Diakonia (Sweden)
FinnChurchAid (Finland)
ICCO: Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation
CORDAID: Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid (Netherlands)
Pax Christi Netherlands
Pax Christi Germany
The Church of Scotland

ASIA / AFRICA / PACIFIC

Australian Council of Churches
Malaysian Council of Churches
South African Council of Churches
Council of African Independent Churches
Anglican Church of South Africa
United Congregational Church of South Africa
Pax Christi Australia

KAIROS/SABEEL AND OTHER FAITH-BASED GRASSROOTS NETWORKS

AFRICA

Kairos Nigeria
Kairos Southern Africa

ASIA/MIDDLE EAST

Indian Solidarity Ecumenical Network
Kairos Sri Lanka

AUSTRALIA

Friends of Sabeel Australia
Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network (PIEN)

EUROPE

Friends of Sabeel Ireland
Kairos Ireland (Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland)
Sabeel-Kairos UK
Friends of Sabeel France
Friends of Sabeel Germany
Kairos Palestine Solidarity Network Germany
Kairos Palestine Appeal Switzerland

Kairo Netherlands
Friends of Sabeel Norway
Friends of Sabeel Sweden
Kairos Palestine – Sweden

NORTH AMERICA

Disciples Palestine Israel Network (USA)
Episcopal Peace Fellowship/Palestine Israel Network (USA)
Peace Not Walls (ELCA/USA)
Mennonite Palestine Israel Network (USA)
Israel Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (USA)
United Church of Christ Palestine Israel Network (USA)
United Methodist Kairos Response (USA)
Canadian Friends of Sabeel
United for Justice & Peace in Palestine & Israel (Canada)
Friends of Sabeel North America (USA)
Kairos USA

SOUTH AMERICA

Kairos Palestina Brasil
Christianos de Base Argentina
Interfaith & Other Religious Organizations
World Student Christian Federation
Norwegian YMCA-YWCA
Unitarian Universalist Association
Fellowship of Reconciliation USA
Iona Community
Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace
Interdenominational Advocates for Peace
Islamic Leadership Council of New York
Indo-Palestine Solidarity Network
Adalah Justice Project (USA)
European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine (includes church-related groups)
ACT Alliance Protection of Space for Civil Society and Human Rights Defenders: Case of Israel Palestine (2017, mentions BDS-supporting organizations in its policy)

3. CRY FOR HOPE

Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice have issued a theological call in “Cry for Hope” to global Christians and their partners. “Cry for Hope” is available in multiple languages at www.cryforhope.org.

"Cry for Hope" joins with movements of oppressed peoples around the world in taking a stand against the politics and economics of empire, a global order of domination manifesting in racial, economic, cultural, and environmental oppression that threatens humanity and all of creation. It calls on churches, ecumenical organizations, concerned advocates from other faith traditions, and partners from all sectors of civil society to undertake seven key actions, including BDS.

"Cry for Hope" is a theological call that includes encouraging BDS as an expression of faith, solidarity and decisive just action, affirming the Palestinians' right to resist the occupation, dispossession, and abrogation of their fundamental rights, and join the Palestinians in their creative and nonviolent resistance.

WHAT IS BDS?

[text for all 4 tabs in dropdown menu - hyperlinks not included]

1. BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, SANCTIONS

Overview

Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) is a Palestinian civil society call for freedom, justice and equality. BDS upholds the simple principle that Palestinians are entitled to the same rights as the rest of humanity.

Israel is occupying and colonizing Palestinian land, discriminating against Palestinian citizens of Israel and denying Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homes. Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, the call for BDS from Palestinian civil society urges economic actions to pressure Israel to comply with international law.

The Big Picture

As a result of the civil society call, Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) has become a Palestinian-led, global movement for freedom, justice and equality. BDS is now a vibrant global movement made up of unions, academic associations, churches and grassroots movements around the world. BDS upholds the simple principle that Palestinians are entitled to the same rights as the rest of humanity. Since its launch in 2005, BDS has had a major impact and is successfully challenging international support for Israeli apartheid and settler-colonialism.

BDS is inspired and inspiring...

BDS draws inspiration from decades of Palestinian popular resistance, from the South African anti-apartheid struggle, and from the US Civil Rights Movement, among other others. It inspires Palestinians and supporters of Palestinian rights worldwide to speak truth to power, to challenge hegemonic, racist power structures, and to assert that Palestinian rights must be respected and implemented.

For decades, Israel has been occupying and colonizing Palestinian land, discriminating against Palestinian citizens of Israel, and denying Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homes. It is maintaining a regime of military occupation, **settler-colonialism**, and **apartheid** over the Palestinian people

Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, the BDS call urges pressure on Israel to comply with international law through three key actions:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall. International law recognizes the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza and the Syrian Golan Heights as occupied by Israel.
2. Granting Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel their right to their dignity and full equality.
3. Respecting, protecting, and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194

Fifteen years since its launch, BDS is now widely supported by many trade unions, academic associations, churches and movements worldwide. As a result of BDS pressure, major companies such as Veolia, Orange, Microsoft and CRH (Cement Roadstone Holdings) are withdrawing from the Israeli market following campaigns and protests over their involvement in Israeli projects that violate international law. The UN and the World Bank have declared that BDS is beginning to have a significant economic impact. Thousands of artists from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, including major celebrities like Roger Waters (Pink Floyd) and Lauryn Hill have joined the BDS Movement through boycott and now refuse to play in Israel.

Israel is increasingly worried that the effectiveness of the BDS Movement is unmasking its racist policies and casting it as an outlier state in the way that South Africa once was. In 2017, the BDS National Committee (BNC) expressed its position against all forms of racism, declaring “racism and racial discrimination are the antithesis of freedom, justice & equality.”

LEARN MORE

Settler Colonialism:

Though often conflated with colonialism more generally, settler colonialism is a distinct ... formation. ...[It] seeks to replace the original population of the colonized territory with a new society of settlers.

This new society needs land, and so settler colonialism depends primarily on access to territory. This is achieved by various means, either through treaties with indigenous inhabitants or simply by “taking possession.”

Britain, for example, implemented the doctrine of “terra nullius” (“land belonging to no one”) to claim sovereignty over Australia. The entire continent was thereby declared legally uninhabited, despite millennia of Aboriginal occupation.

~Tate A. LeFevre, Anthropologist
Settler Colonialism, 2015

Zionism is settler colonialism

"Zionism is not a national movement, it's a settler colonialist movement. ...if we will not use the right dictionary and the right language to describe what goes on on the ground, then we will continue to provide an umbrella of immunity to the settler colonial state of Israel to try and complete what it started in 1948—namely, to have as much of Palestine as possible with as few Palestinians in it as possible."

~Ilan Pappé, Israeli Historian

"The Value of Viewing Israel-Palestine Through the Lens of Settler-Colonialism," Ilan Pappé, lecture at the National Press Club, Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, March 24, 2017

Apartheid

Apartheid is the Afrikaans word for 'apartness', originally used to describe the system of racial discrimination that existed in South Africa until 1994.

The term apartheid is not only a reference to South Africa's former regime; it is used in international law to describe a category of regime, defined in the United Nations (UN) International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973), to which more than 100 states are a party. The definition was refined in Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2002).

The Convention defines the Crime of Apartheid as: "inhumane acts...committed in the context of an institutionalised regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime."

There is overwhelming evidence that the system instituted by the Israeli government against the Palestinian people meets the UN definition of Apartheid. In effect, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory constitute one territorial unit under full Israeli control.

Under Israeli law, and in practice, Jewish Israelis and Palestinians are treated differently in almost every aspect of life including freedom of movement, family, housing, education, employment and other basic human rights. Dozens of Israeli laws and policies institutionalise this prevailing system of racial discrimination and domination. Jewish Israeli settlers are governed by Israeli civil law, while Palestinians also living in the occupied West Bank are governed by Israeli military law.

~War on Want

Israeli apartheid factsheet ([link](#))

2. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQS

Why are the Palestinians calling for BDS against Israel?

Israel is occupying and colonizing Palestinian land, discriminating against Palestinian citizens of Israel, and denying Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homes. It is maintaining a military regime of occupation, apartheid and settler-colonialism over the Palestinian people. Israel is only able to maintain this illegal regime because of international support and complicity. Rather than holding Israel to account, many governments provide Israel with tacit and explicit political cover as well as diplomatic, military, and financial support. Businesses compete to profit from Israel's violations of international law. When those in power refuse to act to stop this injustice, what is needed is a global citizens' response.

What does BDS aim to achieve? Does it call for a one state or a two state solution?

The BDS Movement aims to pressure Israel to respect international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall. International law recognizes the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza and the Syrian Golan Heights as occupied by Israel.
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality.
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.

These are three basic rights without which the Palestinian people cannot exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The BDS Movement does not advocate for a particular political solution to the conflict and does not call for either a "one state solution" or a "two state solution". Instead, BDS focuses on the attainment of legitimate civil rights and the implementation of international law.

How does BDS help the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice and equality?

- The BDS Movement aims to end international complicity with the Israeli regime of occupation, apartheid and settler colonialism. Many companies such as Orange, Veolia and CRH have pulled out of Israel as a result of BDS campaigns giving them bad publicity.
- Many eminent scholars and musicians have rejected lucrative invitations to perform or teach in Israeli Universities.
- As Israeli corporations, institutions and organizations become isolated or suffer economic setbacks due to international BDS campaigns, Israeli businesses and society will find it more difficult to maintain, and even grow, oppression of Palestinians.
- Each BDS success generates media attention and creates heightened public consciousness about the just Palestinian struggle for liberation and equal rights. The BDS Movement is leading a tidal wave of change in perceptions and approaches to Israel's regime of oppression.
- The growth and success of the BDS Movement send a clear message of hope and inspiration to Palestinians and others that public opinion is increasingly supportive of the Palestinian people. The Israeli government now recognizes the potential of the BDS Movement as a "strategic threat" to its system of injustice.

How can I support the BDS Movement? Is there a list of products to boycott?

- The first simple step that people can take is to personally boycott products of companies that are complicit in Israel's violations of Palestinian rights. A list of companies to boycott can be found at BDSmovement.net in the "Get Involved" section.
- One of the most useful things you can do is to get actively involved in a BDS campaign near you that targets a particular product, company or institution.
- There are BDS campaigns in dozens of countries around the world, and hundreds of organisations actively participate in the BDS Movement. It's ideal and easy to get involved with a campaign near you that matches your interests. Better yet, start your own! Check out the BDS Movement's "Get Involved" section for more information.

What has the BDS Movement achieved so far?

Thanks to the strategic campaigning of people and organisations all over the world, the global BDS Movement is having a real impact. For example:

- BDS was a major factor behind the 46% drop in foreign direct investment in Israel in 2014, according to a UN report. A Rand Corporation study predicts BDS could reduce Israel's GDP "by 1 to 2 percent" annually over the next 10 years, while a World Bank report reveals that Israel's exports to the Palestinian economy have dropped by 24% in the first quarter of 2015
- French multinational corporation Veolia has completely withdrawn from Israel after a successful BDS protest campaign over its role in Israel's colonization of Palestinian land cost it billions of dollars in lost contracts.
- Top Israeli weapons manufacturers complain of a plummeting exports "crisis," partly due to "less desire for Israeli-made products."
- Major international companies including Orange, Microsoft, G4S, Veolia and Unilever have announced steps to end their participation in Israel's crimes
- Thousands of recording artists have refused to play in Israel, including Roger Waters of Pink Floyd, Faithless, Lauryn Hill, Brian Eno and Elvis Costello. Many academic associations, student unions, authors, and filmmakers, most notably in the US, Canada, South Africa, and the UK now support BDS. There are also protests by the Indian Art fraternity, and the Palestinian Academy for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). French West Indians and Caribbeans have also expressed disapproval of the Israeli attacks on Gaza. A number of mainline churches have divested from companies profiting from Israel's human rights abuses.
- Israel regards BDS as a "strategic threat" so some Israelis are calling for modest changes to Israeli policy to reduce the efficacy of BDS.

How widely supported is the BDS Movement internationally?

- The 2005 Palestinian call for BDS against Israel has triggered a massive response from people of conscience and civil society organisations around the world.
- BDS campaigns are supported by scores of unions, churches, NGOs and movements representing millions across every continent. Progressive Jewish groups like Jewish Voice for Peace, Boycott from Within, Women's Coalition for Peace, and If Not Now as well as conscientious Jewish-Israeli groups, play an important role in the movement.

- The European Federation of Public Services Unions, representing eight million public service workers, have called for suspending the EU-Israel association agreement. The UK's Trades Union Congress, representing 48 unions and six million people, voted for ending arms trade with Israel that violates Palestinian rights, and to pressure corporations to end complicity in violations of Palestinian rights.
- Public figures like Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Naomi Klein, Roger Waters, Angela Davis and Judith Butler back BDS.
- Corporations, banks and investment funds now adopt the logic of BDS and corporate responsibility, with some starting to divest their funds from Israel's occupation.
- BDS leads major news headlines and is shaping how the Palestinian cause is perceived in public. BDS is leading a tidal wave change in support of justice for Palestinians.

Does BDS call for a boycott of the whole of Israel or just the illegal settlements?

- As in the boycott against apartheid South Africa, the BDS Movement calls for a boycott of Israel's entire regime of oppression, including all of the Israeli companies and institutions that are involved in violations of international law. BDS does not target identity. It strictly targets companies and institutions based on complicity in denying Palestinian rights.
 - For example, we call for a boycott of all Israeli fruit and vegetables, regardless of whether they are within Israel or in an illegal Israeli settlement, because all Israeli agricultural businesses are involved in human rights violations. We also call for a boycott of all Israeli universities, because they are implicated, to various degrees, in the design, implementation, justification, or whitewash of Israel's crimes against Palestinians
- Just like South Africa under apartheid, Israel as a state is responsible for the occupation, colonization and apartheid policies that it implements
- Some of the biggest BDS campaigns are limited in scope against companies that operate outside Israel in illegal Israeli settlements in The West Bank, which Israel has already renamed. (The West Bank does not appear on Israeli maps). . However, support for a full across-the-board boycott of Israel's regime of oppression is widespread. Academic associations and groups of academics, writers and artists in the US, Canada, South Africa, Brazil, and across Europe have come out in support of an academic and/or cultural boycott of Israel
- As the movement grows, so do skills, ambitions and ability to achieve tangible, strategic and sustainable results. And targets are regularly reassessed as the BDS Movement grows

Can BDS realistically end the West's unconditional support for Israel?

- The BDS Movement is leading a change in public opinion in Western societies in regards to Israel. The rapidly growing widespread support by grassroots movements for Palestinian rights is making it harder for governments to maintain their unconditional support for Israel.
- In the US, where the pro-Israel lobby has had a strong hold on Congress for decades, polls indicate an unprecedented and definitive shift in the so-called "bipartisan" support for Israel in the country.
- A 2015 Luntz poll of "opinion elites" shows that 76% of Democratic opinion shapers say Israel has too much influence in the US, with 47% of Democrats agreeing that Israel is a "racist" country. Close to 31% of those leading Democrats, the poll shows, are ready to support BDS.
- Another poll from 2015 shows that 49% of Democrats favor "sanctions or more serious action" against on Israel.
- Americans are increasingly critical of Israel, "with a growing sense that the Israeli government has 'too much influence' on U.S. politics and policies."

- Support for Israel remains deeply entrenched, but the BDS Movement is showing that it can become a hugely powerful tool in ending Western support for Israeli apartheid and settler colonialism
- In Europe governments are taking steps compatible with the movement's general approach, such as measures that enforce the EU's non-recognition of Israel's claim of sovereignty in the occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and Syrian territories.
 - These include warning businesses to stay away from illegal Israeli settlements, excluding Israeli entities operating in the OPT (including East Jerusalem) from funding and recognition, and considering cutting all financial transactions and ending business deals with Israeli banks that fund the occupation, as well as a call for clear labeling of Israeli settlement products

Is BDS Legal?

- The BDS Movement adopts a legal and analytical framework based on international law. The goal of the movement is to pressure Israel to comply with international law and recognize Palestinian rights. The legitimacy of BDS pressure tactics is time-honored and guaranteed under democratic principles and the principle of freedom of expression.
- Boycott for political, economic and social change is regarded by the US Supreme Court as speech that is protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution. However, Israeli officials and pro-Israel lobby organizations in the US are hard at work to outlaw BDS and to undermine the right to protest Israel's crimes using the nonviolent tactics of BDS.
 - Because boycotts are protected as "free speech" under the US Constitution, anti-BDS lawsuits have repeatedly failed and been overturned in US courts.
 - While most of the legal warfare or law fare efforts by Israel have fallen flat, there are worrying trends in some countries.
- Read more about Israel's efforts to criminalize BDS and the legal analysis of why BDS is legal and should be protected as a form of free speech at BDSmovement.net under "Right to Boycott".

Isn't a boycott of Israel antisemitic?

- The BDS Movement stands for freedom, justice and equality
- Anchored in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the BDS Movement, led by the Palestinian BDS National Committee, is inclusive and categorically opposes as a matter of principle all forms of racism, including Islamophobia and antisemitism.
- BDS campaigns target the Israeli state for serious violations of international law, and the companies and institutions that participate in and are complicit with Israeli in these violations. The BDS Movement does not boycott or campaign against any individual or group simply because they are Israeli or Jewish. The BDS tactics are activated against the system of oppression and against violations, as opposed to the identity of the violators.
- The world is growing increasingly weary of Israel's attempts to conflate criticism of its violations of international law with antisemitism, and its attempts to conflate Zionism with Judaism. Israel is a state, not a person. Everyone has the right to criticize the unjust actions of a state.
 - Zionism is a political ideology of a nation and Judaism is a religion; they are not the same thing. Many Jews never accepted Zionism, and many who did are now turning away from it. Jewish Voice for Peace in the US had taken an anti-Zionist position. (see JVP.org/zionism)
- Many Jewish students, academics, intellectuals, LGBTQ+ advocates and a growing number of Jewish-Israelis support and advocate for BDS.

As the US organization Jewish Voice for Peace has explained, Israel claims to be acting in the name of all Jewish people but a rapidly increasing number of Jewish people of conscience feel compelled to make sure the world knows that many Jews are opposed to Israel's actions.

3. BDS HOW TO

GETTING STARTED

THE NUTS AND BOLTS

In reading through the BDS stories from people in different contexts throughout the world, one thing comes through loud and clear: We all have to craft our strategies to address the situation we are in. One size does not fit all. It is important to acknowledge that, then seek ways to move forward.

When it comes to advancing justice for Palestinians, these questions need to be asked and addressed:

1. What is your context? What are the unique challenges? What are the opportunities? What perspectives, input and assistance do you need from other movements?
2. What gifts do you bring to the struggle? What other gifts do you need? Who can bring those gifts?
3. What barriers stand in your way? Who is your opposition? How do you understand the arguments made by the opposition and what counterarguments do you need to shape and advance in your context?
4. How well organized is your group? Who do you have to accomplish advocacy, education and communication, not only within your organization but also within the society you are seeking to address? What conversations can you create among those in different situations and contexts?

A chief reason for establishing this BDS Toolkit is to provide the necessary resources for creating or strengthening support for the BDS Movement in your particular community.

Years ago, at a seminar in Palestine led by BDS National Committee (BNC) leadership, the question was asked about the many diverse BDS working groups that exist and how it is possible to come up with a common strategy in the midst of such diversity. Some were afraid that the BDS agenda as they knew it might not work for their group or church. The BNC response was: "Do what works." In some ways that response liberated activists to go from that seminar and do the work they believe they are called to do in their own unique circumstances.

Below is but one example of how a particular organization examined its own special circumstances and developed a strategy that worked. Other religious traditions have had to create strategies that reflect their unique political structure, determining where decision-making powers reside, who is against them and with them, and then fashioning a process that best works in their own setting.

But one lesson across all groups has been to center Palestinians. It is vitally important for any organization seeking to help achieve justice for Palestine to hear the voice of Palestinians first and to put their voices forward first in their actions.

A CASE STUDY:

“Do what works” was good advice; it launched a number of Presbyterians into action. The Presbyterian Church (USA) had already decided to refer a breakthrough 2004 General Assembly proposal for divestment to the denomination’s investment oversight committee. In addition, that same General Assembly approved the creation of a mission network that would “give voice to the Palestinian cry for justice.” That mission network is where many of those Presbyterians returning from the Bethlehem seminar found their own voice. (see theIPMN.org)

At that time, American Presbyterians as a whole were not quite ready to hear about BDS all at once. The 2004 action for divestment had already created a good deal of opposition which was beginning to make itself heard. There were fears and accusations about the church becoming “antisemitic”, “anti-Jewish” and “anti-Israel” as early as 2006. Knowing the accusations were unjustified, but also acknowledging that the work for justice can be threatening to some, the Presbyterian mission network began its work fully prepared to handle its opposition. They decided to take on BDS one letter at a time. In 2010 the Presbyterian Church (USA) called for economic sanctions on Israel until the occupation ended; in 2012 they voted to boycott all Israeli settlement goods; and in 2014 they voted to divest from Caterpillar Inc., Motorola Solutions, and Hewlett Packard, for profiting from non-peaceful pursuits in the occupied Palestinian territories.

In 2010 the PC(USA) called for sanctions on Israel by voting to calling the US government to condition military aid to Israel on their adherence to US laws. In 2012, the denomination voted to boycott all Israeli settlement goods, and in 2014 they voted to divest from Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions and Hewlett Packard for profiting from non-peaceful pursuits in the occupied Palestinian Territories.

When each of the B, D and S policies were passed, the church distanced itself from the BDS Movement by adding into the language of the new policy that it was not joining the movement. Nevertheless, Omar Barghouti called it “BDS, Presbyterian Style!” and the work was counted as a forward step for BDS, because all three were adopted as policy.

4. BOYCOTTS: ACADEMIC, SPORTS, CULTURAL

“Just as we said during apartheid that it was inappropriate for international artists to perform in South Africa in a society founded on discriminatory laws and racial exclusivity, so it would be wrong for Cape Town Opera to perform in Israel.”

—Archbishop Desmond Tutu, South African anti-apartheid and human rights leader, Nobel Prize winner

School and university campus advocacy and actions, sporting events and cultural events as contexts for BDS are also subject to legal and policy issues that should be researched given both the specific campus or municipality/nation as these vary widely.

Boycott
Boycott Guidelines
Cultural Boycott

"We, the undersigned Latin American artists, declare that from this moment on we will reject any invitation made to us to appear in Israel or in any event financed by this government that leads to the 'normalization' of apartheid..."

Lina Meruane (Chile)

Jesús Abad Colorado (Colombia)

Daniel Devita (Argentina)

+ 500 Latin American artists who signed a pledge for the cultural boycott of Israel

NOTE: PLEASE VERIFY THESE WIKIPEDIA LISTINGS:

RESPONSES TO BDS ACTIONS
(PRO AND ANTI-BDS)
BY GOVERNMENTS AROUND THE GLOBE
FIND OUT MORE [link to wikipedia listing]

BDS STORIES

TOGETHER WE RISE

SHARED IN SOLIDARITY

Below are portals to over two dozen BDS stories from all over the world. These stories include personal and collective experiences and the necessary reflections about what works best and what does not work that well in advocating human rights in Palestine.

The storytellers come from many different backgrounds and experiences. Some share important success stories and insights, while others share frustration with what has not been working. No matter what they share,

however, what we read over and over again is a passion and commitment for justice in Palestine and a commitment to the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement as a nonviolent approach to what appears as an intractable situation.

This story is still unfolding in human history. Often, the struggle against South African Apartheid is mentioned in many of these stories as a reference point. Those who remember that time in history remember that that struggle for freedom also seemed intractable.

The purpose in publishing these stories is to point out the common human understanding that the children of God can overcome differences and achieve the great ends of our faith best described in Micah 6: "God has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

We are grateful to every storyteller who has been courageous enough to share their experiences and insights. We have refrained from mentioning the names of the storytellers because of their different contexts and our concern that no one's work and well-being is compromised as a result of their honest storytelling.

We learn best from each other and the experiences we are able to share. Please take time to read and reflect upon the witness made in these important stories. This solidarity can be instructive to all of us, no matter what our particular context might be.

STORIES

BDS STORIES FROM PALESTINE

STORY 1

I stumbled on the PACBI (Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel) website in 2009. I was feeling helpless, witnessing Israel's bombing of Gaza. I'm Israeli. I found the documents inspiring, clear, and precise. My immediate action was to add a link to the website at the top of my blog. A couple of months later I was invited to join Boycott from Within, the first Israeli group to support BDS. I work with this group to this day. My understanding of the call as an Israeli is that it provides guidelines to a course of action that anyone, from any walk of life, anywhere in the world can take in order to right a grave and prolonged injustice. It spoke in a non-partisan and inclusive way about the violent mechanics of our world, and the practical actions we can take to stop this violence.

I have been a BDS activist for a decade, and take part in and support campaigns worldwide, every day. The biggest accomplishment we have seen is raising awareness on a global scale. There is a difference in the way international media speaks about Palestinians and Israel: what voices are heard and what stories are told. Increasingly, Israel is no longer a charity darling for Americans and Europeans and it creates an uncomfortable context for corporations... Our work in the cultural sphere and music media has, for an unlikely audience, put Palestinians and BDS in a very favorable light, and this is an accomplishment of which we have been a significant part.

Because I am Israeli, I feel it is impossible to address other issues that are important to me (animal rights, LGBTQIA, women's rights, minority rights, poverty, climate, etc.) without addressing Israel's colonialism. All these issues sit atop the indigenous issue.

Within the Israeli context there is mostly hostility towards BDS, even within the more left-leaning parts of the population. As time passes, however, and more Israelis are exposed to what BDS actually is, rather than all the disinformation they acquire through the media and politicians. Like most awareness raising work, the most effective thing is to listen to the misgivings people have and try to dispel them with facts, personal experience and a lot of patience. That said, it is somewhat of a losing battle within Israeli society and opportunities for meaningful awareness raising are scant to begin with.

STORY 2

I was involved in initiatives prior to the Palestinian call for BDS in 2005. In the 1980's, the woman's movement of over 150 organizations promoted the use of only Palestinian products. As a YWCA staff member, I personally took women from the refugee camps to Hebron and Nablus factories to get acquainted with the existing alternatives to expensive Israeli products.

The YWCA in Jerusalem organized a one-day exhibit of all products and goods largely made by women and women's organizations. Right before the BDS manifesto was published in 2005, Sabeel, the Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, published the document, "A Morally Responsible Investment," that addressed churches and religious organizations worldwide to look into their investments and move away from injustice. For example: "How can churches support the building of settlements?" We understood this document to be an ultimate, just, nonviolent call that that could lead to a solution when all international and humanitarian efforts were rejected or neglected by the occupying power. Since people become aware when their pocketbooks hurt, we felt this could very well work.

At a personal level, the application of such a call within the family circle was easily and immediately adopted. We were committed to buy necessary and available Palestinian products (not easy in Jerusalem then), and in my work my responsibility was to educate the local community about the concept of the demands of the BDS call. It was an awareness building process, built on moral values and a new way of simple life by abstaining from unnecessary, frivolous extras as well as nonviolently trying to rectify the violation of all ethical norms and international laws as well.

Locally, in the past 14 years, there have been ups and downs in the commercial boycott movement, especially in Jerusalem where there are cheaper products in Israeli-run stores and supermarkets. Yet at the same time a communal awareness and a sense of belonging has increased as well as that for the cultural, educational and sports boycott.

The most significant local response has to do with increased regular exhibitions and bazaars of Palestinian products and goods throughout the country. There have been added efforts to start new factories and raise the quality of goods to replace Israeli products.

We are at a time when empire/extremism/Christian Zionism are trying to stifle all that is pure and good. Despite the threats and dangers, different religious bodies can rally to stand by each other, seek common

ground and principles even among those on opposite sides. We should not underestimate the power of organized movements.

STORY 3

I have been engaged since the beginning of the writing of the BDS call. To me, it meant taking all the economic, cultural, academic, and sport boycott measures we could against the Israeli system of oppression, as well as against the businesses that are complicit in the oppression of the Palestinian people. Included in that are any programs of normalization between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

In our Palestinian context people welcomed the call to BDS as a creative tool of resistance in spite of some reservations from people who believed it hard to pursue an economic boycott when Palestinian and Israeli economies are so connected. Over time, this view has changed and is changing. In every Palestinian district there is a BDS group that works with people in promoting the economic boycott and fighting normalization activities. Through my own contacts I know that there is progress in promoting BDS at the civil society level, as well as among ecumenical bodies. Locally, many youth groups and students are engaged in promoting BDS.

From my own faith perspective, Christians must stand by the oppressed, poor, displaced and dispossessed. We must help create the kingdom on earth where Love, Justice and Peace prevail. Christians believe that human beings are all equal in their humanity and dignity because all are created in the image of God. Faith communities need to work jointly with civil society groups who share similar values to use their influential power within their own networks and communities to ask people to engage in ethical and prophetic positions and actions.

ON BDS FROM AUSTRALIA

STORY 1

The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network (PIEN) members attended a BDS conference in July 2017 which included details of its boycott campaign. This campaign focused on dates coming into Australia, sourced from the Palestinian Territories but labeled as “Product of Israel.” Similarly, another company with Jordan Valley dates labeled as “Product of Israel” was contacted by PIEN in 2019.

On April 30, 2019 we officially launched our Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions policy and campaign. We have chosen to focus our first effort on Hewlett Packard due to their direct link to the illegal occupation through equipping the Israeli military with the technology infrastructure used to maintain the systems of apartheid and oppression.

We have produced a number of resources for individuals and churches to use, such as a postcard addressed to the Director of HP in Australia, a brochure, a fact sheet, and a number of posters. We are still in the early stages of rolling out the campaign. We see our primary target group as Christians and churches. We have started a grassroots campaign contacting churches on our mailing list.

We consider BDS to be the one human rights initiative which Israel itself fears and we support because it is nonviolent, can be applied very widely, and is known to be effective. Israel cannot ignore measures based on International Law.

In the wider Australian context, there are certainly other important human rights issues, including Australia's treatment of asylum seekers who arrive by boat, its policies affecting the welfare and rights of Australia's First Nations peoples and a whole range of issues related to the rights of women, children, prisoners, the disabled, the aged and religious minorities. These other human rights issues receive far more political and public attention in Australia than those of occupied Palestine.

STORY 2

I first heard about BDS at Carlton University in Canada in 2009 after the "Cast Lead" war on Gaza. The BDS call was focus within the context of Israeli Apartheid Week, and I attended a talk by Omar Barghouti on campus.

I have lived in Australia since 2010 and there has been a steady improvement and acceptance of BDS over the years. There is a greater acceptance of Palestinian rights than there is of BDS as a means to achieve them, but I would say overall there has been noted improvement.

There have been efforts to demonize BDS supporters. I have personally been a target of such campaigns. But the pushback and grassroots support to include Palestinian voices and advocates for BDS within mainstream platforms has been growing. We are not there yet, but there have been gains made for sure, especially within the Arts sector and in writing festivals and theatre practices.

The Australian BDS movement seems to be more organized and focused this year and they ran a very good campaign against Eurovision. The cultural boycott is growing with more mainstream names signing calls for boycott. Stronger ties are being forged with indigenous rights groups and the upcoming Black-Palestinian Solidarity conference at Melbourne University is a great step forward.

We are unique because what we are fighting against is a unique struggle. We are fighting colonialism in a post-colonial era. We are fighting for the rights of refugees to return—when they are the only refugees denied this universal right. We are fighting for equality in a country that is built on the premise of inequality and cannot survive without its discriminatory policies. We are advocating for refugees, millions of whom are living still within historic Palestine—refugees in their own homeland. We are constantly up against exceptions to the rules because Israel is an exception regarding the violation of the rules.

A big challenge exists within the multi-faith dialogue group and so called "peace initiatives." Here in Australia, Muslim organizations are being pushed into such initiatives by the government, because the government ties up lots of funding toward such initiatives. But the end result is that they end up using religion to whitewash Israeli crimes. The problem is many of the Jewish organizations have links to Israeli Zionist groups and fundraising campaigns and material support.

What works:

- Intersectional solidarity —getting involved and being supportive of other struggles for justice can only strengthen our own.

- No room for hypocrisy or racism —human rights are human rights, and we are only stronger together. Do not tolerate hate speech, Islamophobia, antisemitism or any other form of racism.
 - Look for opportunities in the arts, political forums, academia to advocate for justice, peace and equality through BDS.
 - Look for ways to establish and strengthen faith dialogue groups that do not support Israel's criminality. There are many Jewish groups that work tirelessly against the occupation and subjugation of Palestinians. Why not build a multi-faith dialogue with such groups to challenge and weaken the current existing bodies? It is important for religious groups to build bridges, but there needs to be awareness about how this can be done without compromising the Palestinian struggle.
-

BDS STORIES FROM CANADA

STORY 1

I am part of the United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine/Israel (UNJPPI)—a cross-Canada group of people connected to the United Church of Canada. Our mandate is to speak to the church but not for the church. These are my personal observations and opinions.

We have a good working relationship with the staff at the General Council of the United Church and we are not under their direction. In 2012 the United Church passed a resolution regarding economic action. They were reluctant to move as far as BDS. A senior staff person spoke against the BDS movement. In my opinion he did not have a clear understanding about it and was afraid of what he understood the BDS movement to be.

In 2015 UNJPPI focused on BDS at its annual gathering. It was explained very clearly what it was about and we were urged to find some target and work on that—something that would be locally do-able and people could get behind.

UNJPPI did not embrace this BDS work wholeheartedly. We are spread across a big country and our emphasis was on trying to shift United Church policy. It was very difficult to get the national church to put into practice the motions that did get through General Council. So we worked more on education than investing ourselves in BDS action.

One of the concerns I heard at a recent gathering was from a person who is not totally onboard with supporting Palestinian human rights because her deep concern is that our actions might harm Israelis. Despite what she knows about what is happening to Palestinians, her fear is for Jewish Israelis. There is an abiding fear amongst United Church clergy that we must not be anti-Semitic, that we must not break our relationships with Jewish rabbis in Canada, and that we must protect Israel from any possibility of another holocaust situation. And there is a fear of violence from Palestinians.

It is beyond my comprehension how that can be broken through.

STORY 2

We in the Anglican Church of Canada became aware of the 2005 BDS call through efforts made by Kairos Canada staff with responsibilities for solidarity and advocacy with Middle East regional partners including Palestinian church and civil society organizations. The ACC did not sufficiently understand the then current situation, issues, realities on the ground in Palestine or Israel, or in the field of economic advocacy measures including BDS. We were not prepared to respond to the 2005 BDS call.

Soon after the call, Kairos Canada hosted a process of conversation, study and discussion about economic advocacy measures including the BDS call. We represented a range of denominational histories regarding boycott, divestment and sanctions generally. Discussion was respectful, open, informative and hopeful. We wanted to respond to the 2005 call to the best of our abilities knowing it would be challenging work. We committed to bringing the call and what we understood about economic advocacy measures in this context back to the denomination for further discussion.

Subsequent meetings with national ACC program and policy volunteers and others revealed a strong caution, and in some cases, opposition to the BDS call which was believed to be anti-Semitic and deemed to impair or destroy relations with Canadian Jewish communities and individuals. The ACC did not at that time endorse support for boycotts or divestments against Israel.

Efforts in 2013 resulted in stronger, clearer language about economic advocacy measures, but again, toward a better understanding of such measures in this context. The reach and influence of the new anti-Semitism has been wide and successful in public and church media in Canada, in suppressing efforts to raise awareness, open church members' eyes and ears to the occupation, the Wall and the right of return.

We have not tried since 2013 to revise our national church policy. We have put energy into the educational work of the 2013 policy and into opportunities for deeper relationships between church members and Palestinian Anglicans, seeking more direct ways to awareness and advocacy through pilgrimage and companionship.

STORY 3

I visited Israel in 1992 with 12 other Indigenous Christian leaders from Canada, the United States, Panama, Guatemala and Peru. I then visited Palestine/Israel in October/November 2018 and realized that my 1992 visit was the Israeli propaganda tour as I heard nothing about the Palestinian people or their lands. My visit in 2018 was mostly in the West Bank of Palestine and I heard from our Palestinian tour guide the history and struggle of the Palestinian people and could relate to this story as an indigenous person from Canada. I saw that the colonization our people experienced in the Americas was very similar to that of Israel's treatment of Palestinians and the theft of their lands. I was able to relate this familiarity to the other Canadians on the "Come and See" Tour.

I became aware of the United Church of Canada's support of Palestinians and the peace process in Israel/Palestine in 2012. As far as I understand, the United Church has not moved forward with a church-wide BDS campaign. The place of my employment, Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, the national Indigenous ministry training centre of the United Church has not held any discussions about BDS.

We spent most of our time in Palestine/Israel in the West Bank listening to Palestinians tell their stories of history, culture and their encounters with Israeli settlers and the Israeli army. We visited an Israeli settler in one of the settlements near Hebron. We noted how green and built-up the settlement on the top of the hills was in comparison to the Palestinian villages in the valleys. We were invited into the settler's home and he offered food and drink. He began his discussion with us by asking what we had heard about settlements and Palestinians. This began a lively debate. Whenever one of our group shared a story or Palestinian perspective, the settler countered it with a very opposite perspective.

Finally, after a period of wrangling back and forth, the settler asked, "What is your vision for peace?" There was a bit of a reply to him, but no one really answered his question. Then there was a light pause and I told him the story of the Two Row Wampum. I described the belt made to record the agreement between Haudenosaunee people and European nations focusing on the three rows separating the two peoples that represented, firstly, the desire for peace and friendship, and secondly, the respect that forms the basis for peace, and thirdly, that when you are in right relations with one another then you are strong. I said to him, "that is my vision of peace." As we were leaving, the settler warmly grasped my hand in both of his and said, "I like listening to you."

The story of Palestinian oppression needs to be told well. In my own study of the efforts of Martin Luther King Jr., I observed that he basically said about six or seven things. He said them often and in varying settings. He did this enough that I think he created a "vocabulary of consensus."

I think stories need to be told and people asked the question, "What would be a good response to this injustice for our community?"

ON BDS FROM CUBA

The first time I heard about BDS was at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 2018. I attended as an ecumenical delegate representing the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba. It was in the context of a motion presented to the Assembly calling on members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to boycott and divest from Israeli products and companies because of the increasingly aggressive actions and human rights violations by Israel's government against Palestinians.

My context is Cuba, a socialist country in which the economy is mainly run by the state. I do not think there are significant trade relations between the Cuban state and Israel's companies.

As in any country, violations of some human rights occur in Cuba. However, considering that our socioeconomic and political reality differs from many other contexts, human rights initiatives and claims are very different. Many of these claims and initiatives are organized by social groups and political parties not recognized by the government, so they are illegal.

Cuban government's official political discourse has historically condemned Israel's violent and colonizing actions against the Palestinian people, including the permanent violation of their human rights. Such a position

has been voiced through many communication channels, including Cuba's media and national education system.

Even though this particular political view is supported by a significant sector of the Cuban population, I think that many people in Cuba still trivialize the tragedy of the Palestinians. I think it is important to keep telling actual stories about real people's lives and suffering because of unjust situations they have to face every day, rather than explaining the situation in more general and abstract terms. In so doing, I think that people across the world will get a better understanding of what is really happening and why it is so important to get involved in initiatives as BDS.

From a Christian point of view, I think a relevant theological insight to incorporate or emphasize is the covenant between God and Israel as a particular, although not exclusive expression of God's people. Such a covenant includes, as a central component, the responsibility of being an instrument of God's gracious (not punitive) justice especially to impoverished and marginalized people. Serious biblical and socio-theological education is necessary in order to dismantle simplistic geo-political views and literalistic readings of the Bible that support actions against Palestinians and other Arabic countries and peoples.

To me it is ironic that most sectors within Israel and the U.S. opposed to BDS strongly support the U.S. government's embargo against Cuba. In my view, the BDS movement aims to mobilize people to be aware of the continuing violation of Palestinians' human rights by Israeli authorities and settlers, and gets involved in concrete actions to achieve that goal.

QUOTE:

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ON BDS FROM DENMARK

We have been aware of the BDS movement for many years, but it was only in 2017 that the "Friends of Bethlehem" association in Denmark formally discussed its relationship to Kairos Palestine and requested to become a member of the global Kairos Palestine network. In this connection we discussed the call to support BDS in our own Danish context and decided to approach our members to engage in BDS action in their daily lives and local communities by a) not buying products from Israeli settlements and b) appealing to pension funds and Danish authorities/municipalities to divest from companies involved in creating and maintaining Israeli settlements. We did not find it purposeful in our context to call for a total boycott at this stage as it might have a counterproductive effect politically and in terms of broad public understanding and mobilization. Other political associations have called for full sanctions or, as Action Aid Denmark campaigned for the recognition of a Palestinian State and for lifting the siege on Gaza.

We were not the first group in Denmark to support BDS. We only entered the scene in 2017. We have no way of knowing the impact on consumers in terms of boycotting Israel or settlement products. Danwatch engaged in a study process from 2012-2017 entitled "Business on Stolen Land", analyzing investments of pension schemes, municipalities, and analyzing the marketing of tourist agencies of Israel/Palestine. These were useful reports in approaching tourist agencies to change their marketing and getting pension funds and municipalities to disinvest. Strong reactions from Israeli authorities, pro-Israeli groups and politicians in Denmark have proven that this is indeed a very sore and sensitive point. Potentially BDS is a strong tool for awareness raising and nonviolent resistance. But a lot of perseverance is required and there is still a long way to go to make the BDS tool effective and adapted to our specific Danish and European context.

The Palestinian BDS initiative has influenced a lot of hearts and minds, but whereas politicians gradually accepted the boycott of South Africa, Israel/Palestine is a much more sensitive issue for historical, religious and political reasons, leading at times to strong polarization of opinions and reluctance by politicians to go beyond political condemnation of Israeli breaches of human rights to concrete action in terms of BDS or elements thereof. However, the EU and Danish government have issued guidelines for responsible investments, and warned business society to take care in their actions not to unlawfully support the violation of human rights. We believe that an effective tool to raise awareness and commitment amongst decision makers has been the continuous organizing of small team visits to the Occupied Territories.

The particular Danish context makes it virtually impossible to get an official response and support for BDS from church authorities. Hence, it is up to solidarity/friendship associations such as "Friends of Bethlehem" to take the lead in creating awareness and calling for action for justice through its membership.

BDS STORIES FROM GERMANY

STORY 1 - BASED ON TIME SPENT IN CANADA

I first knew about the call for boycott of Israeli goods in the West Bank when I was on staff of the World Council of Churches EAPPI Programme in 2005-2006. My first contact with the way the impetus for economic action was being pulled together under the BDS name was when I attended a civil society BDS conference in Montreal in 2008. There I saw a lot of real energy and commitment. I also encountered people who were advocating armed struggle as well as nonviolent means, so I recognized early on that BDS as "the movement" could put people committed to nonviolence means in very difficult situations, and that the shibboleth of "terrorism" would be used.

I understood this call as a potentially very powerful way of addressing a situation of gross injustice in which there was absolutely no impetus for Israel and its allies to deal with Palestinians or to comply with their responsibilities under international misrepresentation of Palestinians as only interested in violent means which was firmly planted in the public mind and remains so today.

At the General Council of the United Church of Canada in 2006, a number of inter-related resolutions were passed. This provided a true "Kairos moment" for our church. While the title "BDS was not used, there was a

clear call for our congregations and other courts to consider economic activity as part of their faithful response. Divestment of church funds was specified, and it would have been a clear step to link that with boycott and sanctions. It was a watershed time.

I worked for the next four years as part of staff and also congregational groups on efforts to encourage the courts and congregations of the United Church of Canada to engage in the work that would be necessary to act on the resolutions that were passed at our General Council in 2006.

I also participated in a consortium of representatives of churches which met regularly in New York, primarily dealing with divestment strategies. My experiences for those four years was that there was immediate, virulent and constant opposition to any kind of economic action against Israel, most particularly opposition which came from upper management levels in the UCC.

Certainly there were initiatives and resources produced, but anything on economic measures was denigrated and blocked. This situation was a part of a very common phenomenon with any justice-seeking proposals about Israel/Palestine. Those that are clearly benign (“come and see”, “engage in Bible study”, “plant an olive tree”, “talk to your elected officials”, etc. will generally receive attention and active support from church structures, while the measures that ask for concerted economic efforts will not.

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In my personal view, most of us should also engage in a process of repentance. We all took the easy road for far too long. We sent money to relieve suffering, but we did not truly engage and commit. We did not name.

STORY 2 - SAME AUTHOR, BACK HOME IN GERMANY

Here in Germany, there are very specific reasons that BDS is viewed quite differently from other human rights initiatives:

In the view of the majority of Germans and absolutely of the German churches, BDS is a new and very dangerous movement that would prevent or at least restrict the ability of Jews to seek their livelihood and to operate their businesses. People relate this back to the initial economic actions against the Jews in the Third Reich. Germans react automatically with horror at this possibility. They appear to be more aware of the criticisms of BDS as an anti-Semitic movement than they are about the actual human rights crisis in Israel/Palestine and the nonviolent possibilities found in BDS.

In my personal view, most of us should also engage in a process of repentance. We all took the easy road for far too long. We sent money to relieve suffering, but we did not truly engage and commit. We did not name. We did not confront the realities of suffering and death. We did not repudiate the abuse of God’s word. One thing that living in Germany brings home to me is the horrendous effect of staying silent.

BDS STORIES FROM IRELAND

I cannot remember when I first heard of the BDS call from Palestine. I am just aware that I have known about it for quite a long time as an Irish Methodist minister and committee member of Kairos Ireland.

The Irish Methodist Church has not made any response to the BDS call. However, together with a colleague I intend to raise this issue by questioning the ethical investments of our church at its 2020 annual conference. Kairos Ireland is a new organization. We are only beginning to make links with Irish church people in an effort to promote the calls for solidarity by Kairos Palestine. I have personally written to my political representatives and have supported the “Economic Activity (Occupied Territories) Bill” in the Irish Parliament.

I suppose that there is widespread sympathy for Israel because of the well-known story of Nazi persecution. There is also an underlying guilt for past western Christian complicity in antisemitism.

The Palestinian narrative needs to be told and heard. Personal stories of Nakba, loss of land, and destruction of homes may be ways of making the Palestinian narrative real at a human level. Stories from Bethlehem where there is an immediate link for Western Christians might be a useful way of engaging people. Encouraging tourism in the West Bank would be useful. When people see the wall and hear Palestinian stories they will have their eyes opened. Initiatives like Christ at the Checkpoint may be ways of reaching conservative evangelicals.

People need to hear the message of theologians like Naim Ateek in reading the Old Testament through a Christo-centric lens. Literal interpretations of election, promise, and land need to be challenged. We need theological education.

Modern Israel’s PR machine has been very effective in promoting the “David vs. Goliath” narrative. People in the West need to hear the counter narrative—the mass deportations of the Nakba with the destruction of hundreds of Palestinian homes and the destruction of communities. Personal testimonies are an effective way of providing that counter narrative.

BDS STORIES FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

I heard about BDS about 7 years ago and I understood this call to mean that in order to get justice, peace and freedom for both Israelis and Palestinians I needed to respond positively to the call and have done so for years. I did not do BDS immediately when I heard about it because, to be honest, I had not heard of it being endorsed by organizations that I respected. Until I received more information from reputable organizations that I trusted, I then acted.

Within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) of which I am a member, nothing has happened. PCI leadership is probably finding this subject of BDS and supporting Palestinian Christians difficult. In order to do so, they would have to change their core beliefs that Jews are God’s chosen people and this is their rightful land.

I believe that supporting Palestinian Christians will not happen in the PCI at the expense of supporting Israel. The BDS movement has neither improved or become more difficult—it has never been implemented in an organizational leadership way.

Because of the Protestant Biblical connection to Israel and supporting the Jewish people as “God’s people”, the BDS movement is very different from other human rights initiatives in Northern Ireland. It does not receive the same support, understanding, awareness and clarity that other human rights initiatives receive. Education is the answer. We need to involve the churches particularly in Northern Ireland, and human rights charities, to develop an education and awareness training programme.

In Northern Ireland, until there is an understanding of the issues for faith communities here, we will not move very far. I am not a theologian, but I would suggest a few relevant Biblical quotes from Micah in the Old Testament, etc. and then more about Jesus sending the disciples out in the world.

BDS STORIES FROM INDIA

STORY 1

I came to know the Palestine BDS call in 2016 during my visit to Palestine. I understood that this call is essential for a couple of reasons:

1. To orient the International Community to understand what happens inside Palestine, and to motivate them to raise their voice for Justice and Peace in Palestine through mounting pressure on their governments.
2. To condemn the Zionists and to put pressure on them to stop their oppressive attitudes and atrocities against the peace-loving Palestinians and to meet their demands for both Palestinians and Israelis to lead a life with freedom, dignity, mutual respect, justice and peace.

To my knowledge, most Indians and the civil society at large do not know the BDS call, except for a very few Muslim organizations who are already involved in this issue. Among Christians, it is not shared widely either by the Church or by Christian organizations. This has been my experience and understanding.

I understand that a South Asian office has recently opened in Delhi and is vibrant in trying to share about this BDS movement in civil society and in certain other movements. This office is active in the campaigns against HP, Cemax and Neflix—agricultural products—and also voicing against the arms deal between India and Israel.

In India, Dalits and Dalit Christians can lead this struggle in collaboration with Muslims and Indigenous People, as they too face similar oppressions from inside and outside. The Church needs to use its Prophetic Voice, and Human Rights organizations can play the role of leading whistle blowers to condemn the authoritative voices of Zionists and Hindutva Forces, who are Fascists.

We need more than Europe or the Northern Americas. Tangible interventions on this issue need to be done in Asia, Africa and Latin America where similar kinds of oppressed communities exist. There also is a need for a global coalition among such peoples and communities to highlight this issue as affecting a large number of people.

STORY 2

India has had a chequered relationship with Palestine from being one of the first non-Arab nations in the world to recognize the Palestinian Liberation Organization in 1988 to Israel now having become India's major source for the import of armaments and security equipment. The relationship is now based on pragmatic vested interests of the Indian government, with little or no consideration of the impact of these economic deals with the Israeli government.

In India, Palestinian support groups have been sporadic in their responses and actions perhaps because it has been hard to draw them together with movements such as the Dalit Liberation Movement and to recognize the potential for greater solidarity. The BDS movement has therefore not been successful in India—that sounds like a pessimistic assessment, but it is an assessment that has to be made, however disappointing that may be.

I believe the BDS movement can work when we recognize that the Palestinian struggles for their land, their selfhood, and dignity are not unlike the struggles of the Dalits and other Indigenous groups in India. Here too, people all over India have been dispossessed of their land and livelihood—if only they could find the Palestinians as partners in their struggles.

I am not sure I could or should advise the Global Kairos movement, but Justice is at the heart of my faith (Christianity). I would only appeal to them to encourage more and more Dalit and other oppressed peoples in India to be able to engage with the free Palestine movements and contribute to the dismantling of apartheid-like conditions in Palestine and other parts of the world.

Palestinian liberation theologians have so much to teach us and yet our students are taught (except for a few amazing Indian theologians) by traditional theologians to read the Bible still with a pro-Israel stance. Any liberal re-reading of the text is rejected as being anti-Semitic.

My life changed when I was immersed in the life and struggles of Palestinians. That the Indian Churches still continue to send groups of pastors and others on “tours of the Holy Land” where they visit the Garden of Gethsemane, as well as the spot where Jesus was purportedly born, etc., they come back fulfilled that they have been to the Holy Land, but the fact that it is such a partial view of the condition of Christians is not made apparent.

We have a long way in our quest to walk with the Kairos movement, but I firmly believe that we must keep walking forward because our liberation as Christians in India is closely linked to that of the Palestinians. It is time that their struggles for justice and peace found fruition!

ON BDS FROM KOREA

I heard about the BDS call at the time of ecumenical conference of the World Council of Churches in Amman, Jordan, although I understood the notion in the context of the WCC Program to Combat Racism. I understand it to be a resistance movement of the globally committed people against the Israeli Apartheid Regime in a wholistic way.

In Korea we are making a slow but significant progress, for our ecumenical community is fighting against the Christian Zionist political ideology, which is closely related to the U.S.-based Cold War regime, which divided our people for the last 75 years. This is closely related to Israeli Zionism. We are seeking to build a network of BDS on the linkage of the Korean Pilgrimage program with Israeli Zionism.

I believe that the colonial process, U.S.-led American geopolitical hegemony and economic globalization and technocratic and cultural hegemony must be dismantled with the spiritual resistance. I believe that the polity and power of liberal nation states, their international organizations have failed to foster the peoples' free self-determination.

The spiritual convergence of creativity, both evolutionary and transformative, needs to be promoted. The spirituality of all faiths must seek to overcome theological, doctrinal, ecclesial and religious organizational divisions and boundaries for the sake of justice, peace and conviviality.

QUOTE:

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KOREAN CIVIL SOCIETY CALLS FOR END TO MILITARY COOPERATION WITH ISRAEL

The following statement was published by Korean civil society organization in 2014.

Korean civil society and popular movement organizations demand an immediate halt to all military transactions by the Korean government with Israel at a time of ongoing bombings and escalating casualties in Gaza. Weapons exports data reported to UN Comtrade reveal that Korea has exported some \$30 million worth of weapons to Israel in the last ten years, and imported around \$40 million of Israeli weaponry over the same period.

ON BDS FROM THE NETHERLANDS

We heard of the BDS call with the launch of Kairos Palestine document of 2009. We understood it as an important way of nonviolent resistance to injustice.

It took some time to fully understand the importance of this call. Boycotts are in general not considered an adequate means of dialogue for change. We organized a conference in 2012 for a better understanding of its meaning with the participation of the Kairos Palestine coordinator. However, boycotts of the occupying power are not widely accepted within our churches and society.

We have participated, in collaboration with another civil society group, with local boycott actions to raise public awareness. Members of Kairos Sabeel Netherlands have participated in action against pension funds, pharmaceutical companies, and public transport companies. No significant accomplishments have resulted so far. Public awareness is very low and a struggle for justice is not seen by many as important for ourselves.

The most important influence has been the encounter with Palestinians more directly, during travel or during visits of Palestinian representatives and friends to our country. So far, BDS is a matter of a small minority.

ON BDS FROM NEW ZEALAND

I first heard of BDS while attending the 2018 Kairos conference in Bethlehem. From what I gather, BDS is a call to stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine in the following ways: 1) boycotting Israeli goods, including universities and its cultural institutions; 2) divesting from companies that provide essential gear to the Israeli military; 3) asking countries to impose sanctions on Israel.

I have come across like minded people in the Methodist Church of New Zealand (MCNZ) who are interested in exploring and taking up the issues of BDS with the Methodist Conference (national governing body). I am also in contact with the Ethics Committee of the MCNZ who are open to discussing the matter. It's a slow progress but there is hope—it seems.

The BDS movement, in my view, is a critique of capitalist practices of exploitation. Capitalism is colonial, or to be more precise imperialist. The system of colonial exploitation works through unequal exchange where the exchange of manufactured products is sold rather expensively in the colonies by commercial monopolies supported by the State. The plundering of the resources of the peripheries, the oppression of colonized peoples, their direct or indirect exploitation by capital, remain the common characteristics of the phenomenon of Israeli colonialism. I believe the BDS movement offers a distinct vantage point to read and understand Israeli colonialism, not as cultural struggle, but as a form of capitalist exploitation (or class struggle).

Faith communities can bring awareness to the issues of injustice within their own context by simply speaking about it and by standing with those who speak against such ill. They can develop and offer relevant educational resources related to the BDS movement and become active advocates for BDS by drawing attention to, and implementing resolutions to boycott goods made in Israeli settlements or manufactured on occupied Palestinian lands in violation of international law.

In our context it would help to relate Israeli colonialism to the oppression of the Maori people in New Zealand, especially in relation to land confiscation by the European settlers. The New Zealand Wars ended nearly 150 years ago, but their impact continues to be felt today. Quite recently, the construction of Auckland airport and nearby sewage works caused more harm to those Maori who had returned to settle on a small fraction of their

former lands. The struggle of indigenous people in New Zealand is a struggle against the neo-colonial forces of free market capitalism.

ON BDS FROM NORWAY

STORY 1

I first heard about BDS through Sabeel's "Morally Responsible Investments" book in 2004. I wrote an article in 2006 ("The Israeli Occupation and the Churches—the Right to Criticize and Divest?"). I have also addressed the topic in 6-8 op-eds in Norwegian newspapers, for correcting the impression that boycotting the occupation is viewed as anti-Semitic or identical to boycotting Israel.

There is no doubt that the antisemitism accusations have been harder and harsher, and it does require some courage even to call for a narrow BDS, that is, targeting those benefiting from the occupation. Note that we do not use the term BDS, but rather, "economic measures against Israel's occupation."

There have been attempts of referring to the Norwegian experiences during the 1940-1945 occupation, but that is generally not successful. A better approach, as I see it, is to focus on all situations of occupation. I, myself, have been working against the Moroccan occupation and Norwegian companies benefiting from resource extraction from Western Sahara.

Religion without liberation and justice for the oppressed is inadequate religion. The BDS movement needs to stress that this is not against a particular religion or a particular people, but against those who are willingly contributing to upholding occupation and furthering dispossession, in contravention to international law.

STORY 2

I heard about the BDS call after summer 2005. I heard it as a very strong and broad challenge from the Palestinian civil society to the global solidarity movement (including faith communities, unions, peace activists, solidarity movements, etc.) and to states to use a nonviolent approach to put pressure on Israel to comply with international law and international resolutions.

I was happy to hear about the BDS call and the strong support it gained in the Palestinian civil society. I understood the call to invite all possible international actors to be creative about finding ways of using BDS to end the illegal occupation and annexation of Palestinian land.

I cannot recall if BDS was immediately taken up by the religious communities/structures, but mostly within the solidarity movements. However, it gradually became an issue within churches. The position of the Church of Norway has always been clear to discourage any involvement (trading, investments, purchase of products) that are coming from settlements or supporting the establishing and sustain of illegal settlements in occupied territories.

There has been very strong opposition to BDS as a tool against Israel. The comparison to the boycott of apartheid South Africa has been strongly rejected, and BDS campaigning has been accused of de-legitimizing Israel and its right to exist. Others have used more pragmatic arguments to reject BDS like, "it doesn't work" or, "it will only affect negatively on the civilians, Palestinians and Israelis." It is also felt that the risk of destroying and ending the inter-religious dialogue between Christians and Jews, which is very necessary and welcomed in itself, has been limiting both the further progress on BDS and also the practical implementation of even a "soft BDS" through broad campaigns.

Because BDS has been seen and is still seen as antisemitic, very few Christian leaders and ecumenical organizations have publicly positioned themselves as supporters of BDS as it is understood from the perspective of the BDS movement and from Kairos Palestine.

Some years ago we agreed that the Kairos movement had the potential of building a united and global campaign on BDS. The big and unique potential of BDS as a political tool against Israeli occupation and breaking of international law would be if Palestinian civil society and international civil society could come together in a unified and targeted campaign. The Palestinians never came up with any suggestions as to how such a unified global campaign could be. The potential of global ecumenical movements is if they are mobilized to speak with one voice. A practical BDS campaign could be a way of speaking with one voice. But this requires the local Christian communities of Palestine to come together with one consolidated strategy for how and on what the global community should be mobilized.

STORY 3

"Y Norway" believes in justice as the basis for all peace and reconciliation. We support a process where loving pressure is put on the part that does not comply with international law. Therefore we took a position to support a broad boycott of Israeli products in 2011.

The BDS movement is all about freeing the oppressed and the oppressor. Israel will destroy not only Palestine if unwilling to implement the international law, but also destroy themselves. BDS is protected by freedom of speech. It is an effective, peaceful, non-violent and loving tool of resistance that aims at placing Israeli under pressure to comply with and respect international law. Although we faced some pressure for different parties in Norway as a result of supporting BDS, we believe that we gain much respect from our people and the civil society groups for using the slogan of "BDS by Love." ~ YMCA/YWCA Global, Norway

STORY 4

The Student Christian Movement in Norway (SCM Norway) was early on clear on its stand on Palestine. SCM Norway is a member of the international movement World Student Christian Federation (WSCF). In 1968 the WSCF adopted a clear support to the Palestinian liberation. It was stated that peace could not be achieved until the occupation was put to an end. This was a year after the Six Day War when Israel had demonstrated total military superiority.

In 1975 SCM Norway was involved in the establishment of "The Palestine front" and in 1976 "Christians for Palestine" was established. Christians for Palestine and SCM Norway arranged demonstrations, meetings, services of solidarity, visits to and from Palestine and they were vocal in the public debate through the 1980s.

The group drew much attention, because the common understanding of Christians automatically supporting Israel was shaken.

Through the 1980s and 1990s the public opinion on the Israel/Palestine conflict shifted. The Labour Party, the unions and more Christians supported Palestine. The later years the Church of Norway's opinion has changed as the support to the Palestinian liberation is much more common.

Since 2008 SCM Norway has been in close contact with its sister organisation, Palestine Youth Ecumenical Movement (PYEM). The two SCMs organise yearly exchanges with visits to and from Palestine. SCM Norway is also supporting a Women's centre in Abu Dis, that employs women and provides training in rights as women living under occupation.

SCM Norway has adopted a full boycott of Israel, economic, academic and cultural. The reason for the academic boycott is the Israeli academia's involvement in the Israeli occupation, when working closely together with the Israeli military. Also, Palestinian students are facing difficulties while traveling between campuses on the West Bank due to the wall and the checkpoint and the contact between universities in Gaza is denied by Israel.

BDS STORIES FROM SOUTH AFRICA

STORY 1

I heard of BDS during my training as an ecumenical accompanier with EAPPI (Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel of the World Council of Churches) in 2011. I understood it to be a form of nonviolent resistance that helped to end apartheid in my own country, South Africa, and there it could be effective in the case of Israel/Palestine.

Generally speaking, there is some tension between BDS South Africa and solidarity activists in the country. BDS SA regards itself as an organization and it focuses mostly on influencing the ruling political party (the ANC) while the activists are saying that all political parties and others must be part of the target audience.

The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) issued the following statement: "Synod acknowledges the significant similarities between (the South African) context and that of occupied Palestine today. The URCSA stands with the people of Palestine against the practices of abuse, oppression, marginalization and dehumanization directed towards them by the state of Israel. Synod also expresses concern about the ease with which Christian faith communities proclaim a Zionist agenda justified by Scripture, and calls on URCSA congregations to refrain from such Christian Zionism. In the spirit of the Belhar Confession, the URCSA has no other option but to stand with our sisters and brothers in Palestine as they continue to suffer the atrocities of occupation and oppression."

This was not followed by any substantive (BDS) action because our churches do not have investments in Israel. WE have had only one big consumer boycott in South Africa (2014).

I am aware of the “Come and See” booklet, and it is an important and relevant document. More information, and especially theological reflections on land, identity, history, covenant, etc. can help Christians to become sensitized and discerning.

STORY 2

My duration in the West Bank lasted from May 1, 2004 until April 30, 2005, serving as a Communication Coordinator for the Joint Advocacy Initiative of the YWCA of Palestine and YMCA of East Jerusalem. There have been numerous subsequent solidarity visits as well, locating me at the cold face of the development of the BDS Campaign. By sheer chance, Muhammed Desai, co-founder of BDS South Africa, paid me a visit on my 31st birthday while staying in Palestine.

The first time I heard and followed this noble call (BDS), I was based in Beit Sahour. It was very easy for me to comprehend the BDS Call as a South African who values the International Solidarity of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. I carried on this advocacy work upon my return back home to South Africa. I kept reporting about the “Palestine Question” within the South African National Council of YMCAs. This extended to the (then) School of Religion and Theology through the UJamaa Centre for Community Development and Research. Some results of this approach led to the late Professor, Steve de Gruchy, including the Palestine Olive Tree Campaign in his Theological Discourse. Two more colleagues would later accompany me to Palestine to learn about the struggle there. Today a very vibrant Palestine Campaign is being led by Dr. Clint le Bryuns.

When I started talking about this Palestine Question, it irritated so many in my circles. But today, the BDS Campaign in South Africa is a well-known course. It agitates and angers “White Monopoly Capital” and has made it impossible for the African National Congress to sit on the fence and be non-committal. Minister Lindiwe Sisulu had to be reshuffled due to her outright support of the BDS and related campaigns against the dehumanization of Palestinians.

When the South African Council of Churches found no room or physical space on its premises to accommodate the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel, my denomination, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa, adopted the SA Coordinator of the WCC EAPPI Programme.

The next National General Secretaries of the YMCA in the Globe meeting will be held in East Jerusalem in 2020. This act preceded the establishment of the Task Team formed in London last month. Within the Kairos Palestine SA Working Group, assistance has been given to the Anglican Church in Southern Africa’s forthcoming General Assembly to table A Motion in Support of the Palestine Solidarity Initiatives. If this succeeds, the next Lamberth Conference may be compelled to discuss the Palestine International Solidarity initiative.

The Methodist Church in Southern Africa undertook a “Come and See” Alternative Tour to Palestine this year. In my own denomination, a resolution was taken this month by the Young Adults League Churchwide Conference to undertake a “Solidarity Visit to Palestine.” Last year, this organization hosted Munar Nassir of Kairos Palestine during her visit in July 2018.

These are but a few positive steps that are slowly becoming tangibles in my space and society.

STORY 3

I was involved with BDS in the 1970's and 1980's through the South African anti-apartheid movement. I understood that call as an effective way of mobilizing popular resistance in nations and communities around the world; a way of exerting economic pressure on the South African regime to abandon its racist practices.

Following that experience, when I first went to Palestine/Israel in 2008, as a human rights observer, it wasn't difficult to recognize the similarities between South Africa and the Occupation. Becoming involved with Kairos Palestine and the response in Kairos Britain, there was no doubt in my mind that BDS was going to become a major tool of resistance. The fact that Palestinian civil society, as well as the churches, are calling for it gives us an important lever for advocacy in this field.

At the national level, the campaign for morally responsible investment and calling for divestment from companies and organizations complicit in the Occupation has achieved limited success. My own local group is engaged with supermarkets and shops regarding goods imported from illegal Israeli settlements and we are persevering with a campaign calling for a boycott of those products. Some of us would want to go further to include a boycott of all Israeli produce and manufactured goods until the Occupation ends. We persevere with this, but the recent (deliberate) campaign to equate opposition to the state of Israel with anti-semitism has made promotion of BDS more difficult.

We find that enabling the stories of the Palestinian people to be heard in their struggle through film and personal/group visits are powerful not only in themselves but in take the story to the next level by answering the question: So what can we actually do apart from sending money? The "Come and See" call is so vital. Minds and hearts become changed when people are enabled to see for themselves.

STORY 4

I first heard about BDS in 2009. Coming from South Africa, this was not a difficult thing to understand, knowing what BDS has done of us as black South Africans who once lived under colonialism and maximum racist injustice. All I understood was the need to encourage and remind our own where we come from and that it was a time for us to give back in Solidarity, knowing what Apartheid did to us and how we came to the decision to sanction the "hand that was feeding us." So when the call came from Palestine, for us here it was more of a look back to where we came from and how what we did (through BDS) saved us.

Culturally the call has been taken seriously over the past 5 years. At first, our people were misinformed about the state of Israel. People still held to the understanding of the Israelites as the "people of God" and were fearful to mess that up. Through the teachings of activists, people gained a better understanding, so now the boycott of cultural boycott (for instance) has been opened within our art and sports cultures. This has been the same for society at large and people of faith. Education is the key, but mostly Palestinians need to have a strong lead.

We are seeing a lot of improvement regarding the Call to BDS, especially amongst workers, those in government, and some in Church. We still lack full commitment due to us being a developing country and somehow still dependent on the well-developed nations. This causes our government to be more lenient vs. taking a firm stand, especially in regard to what is proposed by society at large.

BDS remains the most robust and active human rights initiative that we have in the forefront. Every day it continues to put itself forward by conscientious people, more than entities. For South Africa it is more about giving back for what was once done for us. We remember very well how it feels to be colonized and is therefore not so much of a struggle to understand. Our society is still concerned about Palestinians not showing a strong lead themselves in taking BDS further.

As a people of faith, we are never to stop doing right in accordance with the teaching of Scripture, but we must look beyond the person and see the human in every human being. BDS is a gentle and nonviolent way of persuading Israel to do what is right. It has worked in other similar intractable conflicts like South Africa and there is no reason to suppose it will not work to help resolve the Palestine/Israel injustice.

BDS STORIES FROM SWEDEN

STORY 1

I first heard about BDS around 2014 and from the beginning I like the thinking around it. It was an interesting approach to use “market forces” against themselves.

Being a European country, any kind of criticism against Israel has to be very clear and to the point not to be seen as anti-Semitic. Over the last years, I think Netanyahu has succeeded with his narrative that “Judaism is Israel”.

I am happy the EU both stated and actually acted on excluding settlement products from both trade agreements and R&D funding. This made it easier for the civil society to argue at least that we should boycott settlement products.

To be able to include people in Sweden, it is important that BDS is not perceived as an all-or-nothing proposition. In our setting a full boycott of Israel is neither politically possible nor agreed upon within the Christian community. But, we can argue for a boycott of settlement products and we can argue for individual responsibility not to trade with the occupation.

STORY 2

I first went public with the BDS call in Sweden when Mitri Raheb and Gideon Levy received the Olof Palme Prize in Sweden four years ago. In Sweden, the Palestine Solidarity Association (PGS) has been public with BDS for many years, but it is a small movement, not often reaching out to the public.

Since the time I first went public, the Swedish public debate has turned against BDS in a way not as severe as in Germany, but almost. The Church of Sweden says explicitly that it does not support BDS, but differentiates between occupied territory and Israel “proper.” The Swedish state is cooperating with the Israeli state and Yad Vashem in a big drive against antisemitism, no least among immigrants from the Middle East in Sweden. It is

hopeless in Sweden to get the big players for BDS, in my discernment after four years of small attempts to reach out to the Church and within the social democratic party.

I trust the BDS movement, if it shall have any chance in Sweden, must explicitly work with Jewish Israeli groups and individuals who try to perform resistance against the Israeli colonial policies.

We need to have a more inclusive vision of the means of BDS. The three goals: end the occupation and apartheid, equal rights, and return of refugees are fine. The means must be explicitly not be anti-Jewish to work in Sweden. Many supporters of the Palestinian call for justice are not public about their wish to support BDS because they want to continue to travel to Palestine and visit the people.

ON BDS FROM THE UK

I heard about the BDS call following Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in 2009/10 when discussions about how Palestinians could respond to the conflict became more prevalent in the wake of Israeli aggression. I became much more familiar with it when I began working for Kairos Britain in 2014 as the Kairos call endorses the BDS call.

In the UK we are seeing progress in areas like divestment where the Churches are beginning to engage with divestment on other issues (i.e. fossil fuels). The boycott campaigns tend to be strong amongst non-religious civil society (i.e. universities, young people, etc.) but not in the churches and certainly not endorsed by the hierarchy of the church. In the last 2-3 years BDS campaigning has been challenging in civil society due to moves to make it illegal and the precedent set in this way by other countries, as in the USA. We try as much as possible to ensure that people know it is not illegal in the UK to campaign in this way.

Our Investing for Peace campaign focuses on the issue of Church funds being invested in companies profiting from occupation, and the campaign calls for each denomination to implement an effective screening process to avoid this happening, and for Churches to divest from any companies in their investment portfolio that are profiting from occupation. We are in the early stages of this campaign but have seen good successes so far. The Quakers in Britain have adopted our policy/screen process and we have seen over 800 Methodists voting favour of it this year too. Other groups are raising awareness and campaigning within the Church of England, URC, Baptist, Churches in Scotland and Catholic denominations but we have a long way to go.

BDS STORIES FROM THE USA

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST - UCC

My activity in Palestinian justice issues and the moral authority of economic leverage as a nonviolent tactic have been deepened through the United Church of Christ decision of 2015 to employ boycott and divestment, and to encourage governmental sanctions against injustices imposed by Israel against Palestinians.

For me the BDS movement has provided a direct “ask” which compels, motivates and energizes my work. The Palestinian Call to BDS is a moral call, demanding a response and direct, personal involvement. As we organized and educated our denomination prior to the 2015 decision to boycott and divest from certain businesses, I was pulled into dialogue and clear stances which had, until then, remained less specific. This clarity of commitment and action, along with the conviction that we in the U.S. must heed the tactic chosen by the Palestinian Christian community, have served me well and continues to do so.

As I work for justice in Palestine, it is the bold courage and deep resilience of the Palestinian people via BDS which keeps me rooted, grounded and willing to push past prior insecurities or safety nets. Not only to my United Church of Christ setting, but also in municipal divestment efforts in Portland, Oregon, the necessary and essential imperative for me remains loyalty to the BDS imperative. Although setbacks occur, victories multiply. There is no doubt in my mind that, as in South Africa, Palestinian justice will prevail. I am grateful for the nonviolent tool of BDS which permits my direct involvement in this outcome.

JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE - JVP

I was living in Tel Aviv during the 2009 war. My children were very young, and I noticed what little attention other parents were paying to the war happening just an hour away. It was at that time that I began to understand how important it was that there be consequences (as light as they might be) for Israelis for their policies, or the status quo, which was intolerable, would be maintained forever. A few months later, when Naomi Klein came on a book tour that respected the call to BDS, I embraced it fully.

In the particular context of Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), we started with an “occupation-only” approach to the BDS call, largely out of fear that endorsing it in full would be problematic and we wouldn’t be able to organize within Jewish spaces anymore. This was always a tension within the JVP membership, because there was always a significant number of members who wanted to endorse the call in full. It also revealed the differing interests of varying constituencies within JVP (Rabbis, for example, were much more worried about the impact of their professional lives than students). After a process of several years, we endorsed the full call in 2015. The factors involved included the 2014 War, which moved many more people to take action, increasing numbers of anti/non-Zionist Jews in JVP’s membership, possibly the existence of JStreet, which pulled in JVP’s “right wing” in the early years, and increased alienation from the mainstream Jewish community and thus a determination to build our own Jewish institution where we could be our full selves.

We like to think that our endorsement of BDS shifted the conversation in the broader Jewish community, making it a serious factor in Jewish communal politics, clearing the way for more moderate Jews to endorse limited forms of boycott, and disrupting the narrative that the Jewish community is unified against BDS. When we talk about BDS we compare it to the effort to end apartheid in South Africa, the civil rights movement of the U.S., indigenous rights movements, and even the successful fight to tip U.S opinions on gay marriage and ultimately make them legal.

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

Through Global Ministries, the United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have been engaged in the critical issue of Israeli-Palestinian peace and justice for decades. We have followed closely the debates on divestment since before BDS as a movement was established in 2005, and were not surprised by the call of Palestinian civil society when the original letter was issued. Some of our Palestinian partners were among the original signatories, so we have paid close attention to the substance and to the plea. We read and engaged the letter/call, and since then have made it possible for our church members and delegations to meet with those involved in the movement, both among partners and in the Palestinian civil society movement itself (particular Omar Barghouti) while visiting Palestine, or when he has been present in the U.S. Our churches see it as consistent with efforts to use economic measures to bring justice in situations of oppression, in which our churches have participated historically. For Kairos Palestine to take up the call has made the option additionally relevant for us.

Our response to the BDS movement is consistent with our engagement in human and civil rights struggles in other contexts. Our efforts in regard to Israeli-Palestinian peace and justice are in the same vein. We are helping our churches to know the reality that Palestinians live, under occupation and as refugees. This has been key, and has been an ongoing effort over the decades, not just in the last 14 years. Education has been key, and the voices of our Palestinian partners have also played a crucial role.

It takes a collaborative effort to make change, including local and global partners. We rely on Palestinian Christian partners, and we also are encouraged by the global network engaged on this. In the U.S. we recognize the complicity of our government, and know the challenge we have as churches, but are called to keep up the struggle, encouraged by the message of Kairos Palestine: faith, hope, and love from the midst of suffering!

ANOTHER CHURCH STORY

I first heard about BDS about in the early 2010's, and I understood it to be a call by Palestinian civil society for global nonviolent campaign to pressure Israel to grant Palestinians humans rights and self-determination. I learned the specifics of the campaign goals later.

In the academic sector, there have been some significant successes with the Women's Studies Association and the American Studies Associations endorsing the BDS campaign. Politically, as you know, in the U.S., we are seeing campaigns being pushed by pro-Israeli organizations to make BDS actions illegal and to explicitly create a false link between BDS and antisemitism. I think the situation has become more complex and more difficult.

I use my social media network to share educational articles about the human rights situation in Palestine, and about advocacy initiatives to push for Palestinian human rights, like BDS. I share many articles posted by Jewish Voice for Peace to expressly show that parts of the Jewish community support Palestinian human rights and are critical of Israeli policy. I participate in local peace movement conferences and events and invite others to do so as well. I have also used the occasion of my church's Christmas Fair Trade Fair to pair Palestinian olive oil with a flyer about how parishioners can help Palestinian Christians. I also contact my elected representatives to let them know that I support Palestinian human rights including the right to self-determination and, in the U.S., the right to boycott and would expect that they would too, is it represents fundamental freedom.

I think making the comparison between South Africa and Palestine is important, and making the connections between Palestine and other struggles. Also highlighting the plight of Palestinian Christians is a good starting point for outreach to Christians. Providing succinct, easy to digest materials with key background facts, including information about violations of human rights and international law are essential, along with ideas for advocacy.

The Christian obligation to work for justice and peace is key. The historical link between the first Christians and today's Palestinian Christians, who have maintained the traditions of the early Church through the millennia must be repeated. It is important to educate all audiences, even religious/ecumenical ones, about the core violations of UN resolutions, international law and human rights treaties. They also need to know where the support in the U.N. is coming from so they can pressure their governments.

Years ago, at a seminar we attended in Palestine led by BDS National Committee (BNC) leadership, the question was asked about the many diverse BDS working groups that exist and how it is possible to come up with a common strategy in the midst of such diversity. Some were afraid that the BDS agenda as they knew it might not work for their group or church. The BNC response was: "Do what works." In some ways that response liberated activists to go from that seminar and do the work they believe they are called to do in their own unique circumstances.

"Do what works" was good advice; it launched a number of Presbyterians into action. The Presbyterian Church (USA) had already decided to refer a breakthrough 2004 General Assembly proposal for divestment to the denomination's investment oversight committee. In addition, that same General Assembly approved the creation of a mission network that would "give voice to the Palestinian cry for justice." That mission network is where many of those Presbyterians returning from the Bethlehem seminar found their own voice. (see theIPMN.org)

At that time, American Presbyterians as a whole were not quite ready to hear about BDS all at once. The 2004 action for divestment had already created a good deal of opposition which was beginning to make itself heard. There were fears and accusations about the church becoming "antisemitic", "anti-Jewish" and "anti-Israel" as early as 2006. Knowing the accusations were unjustified, but also acknowledging that the work for justice can be threatening to some, the Presbyterian mission network began its work fully prepared to handle its opposition.

We decided to take on BDS one letter at a time. In 2010 the Presbyterian Church (USA) called for economic sanctions on Israel until the occupation ended; in 2012 they voted to boycott all Israeli settlement goods; and in 2014 they voted to divest from Caterpillar Inc., Motorola Solutions, and Hewlett Packard, for profiting from non-peaceful pursuits in the occupied Palestinian territories.

In 2010 our denomination called for sanctions on Israel by voting to calling the US government to condition military aid to Israel on their adherence to US laws. In 2012, the denomination voted to boycott all Israeli settlement goods, and in 2014 they voted to divest from Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions and Hewlett Packard for profiting from non-peaceful pursuits in the occupied Palestinian Territories.

When each of the B, D and S policies were passed, the church distanced itself from the BDS Movement by adding into the language of the new policy that it was not joining the movement. Nevertheless, Omar Barghouti called it “BDS, Presbyterian Style!” and the work was counted as a forward step for BDS, because all three were adopted as policy.

NEWS & VIEWS ON BDS

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ARGENTINA

No to Sportswashing "friendly" match

In 2018, Argentina canceled a “friendly” match in Jerusalem following months of BDS campaigning. Israel’s Comtec Group, which has clients in illegal Israeli settlements, was the organizer of the failed Argentina friendly as well as the Argentina vs Uruguay match.

Sylvan Adams, a Canadian billionaire real-estate magnate and self-proclaimed ambassador for Israel, is reportedly covering a significant sum toward the costs of organizing the Argentina vs Uruguay match. Adams has stated that he is dedicating the current chapter of his life to “the promotion of what I call 'normal Israel,’” to deflect attention from Israel’s violations of Palestinian human rights and international law.

Adams and Comtec have teamed up to bring events to Israel before, including Madonna to the 2019 Eurovision Song Contest, the 2018 Big Start of the Giro d’Italia cycling race and a failed attempt to bring the 2019 Miss Universe Pageant to Israel.

BRAZIL

BDS in Brazilian Media

Popular singer Milton Nascimento signed a contract for performances in Europe that included Tel Aviv on June 30. BDS and personalities send letters asking singer Milton Nascimento to cancel his show in Tel Aviv. Popular singer Roger Waters had his personal letter to Milton Nascimento published by the mainstream media.

Despite of pressures coming from multiple directions, money spoke louder and Milton Nascimento carried out his shameful performance to Zionist audiences. Just before his presentation, he publicized a statement saying that his performance does not mean any support for the Israeli administration but only his desire to let his fans to attend a live show. Soraya Misleh, a major BDS activist in Brazil, wrote that the Israeli administration is not the point.

The point is the Israeli State and its 70-year-old policy of apartheid and Ethnic Cleansing which prevents Palestinians from attending his show because Israeli apartheid do not allow them to go to the lands of their ancestors. For Soraya the campaign was critical to bring the issue of Israeli apartheid to the broader audience. For sure, any singer who decides to hold performances in Tel Aviv will have to think twice.

CHILE

Making BDS Illegal Opens a New Battlefield

The Chilean National Comptroller ruled this week that it is illegal for local municipalities in the South American country to boycott Israel, wading into an ongoing national debate over the BDS movement. Earlier this summer, Valdivia in southern Chile became the first city in Latin America to officially boycott Israel after a local government vote initiated by the Mayor Omar Sabat, who is of Palestinian origin.

Chile is home to the largest Palestinian diaspora community outside of the Middle East, with a population of 500,000. Around 18,000 Chileans identify as Jewish. The measure declared Valdivia an "Apartheid Free Zone" and banned the city from working with any businesses linked to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories.

The Chilean Congress approved a resolution calling for the boycott of Israeli settlements by a vote of 99-7, with 30 abstentions. The resolution included a demand to re-examine all agreements signed with Israel to ensure they cover only territories within the Green Line, while a second demand called for assurances that all future agreements only pertained to Israel proper, not occupied territory. The motion also ruled on giving guidelines to Chilean citizens doing business in Israel so as not to "support colonization or cooperate with human rights violations in the occupied territories".

GLOBAL SOUTH

Why a military embargo is needed:

International corporations and governments are enabling Israel's attacks on Palestinians through their support of Israel's military industry and research facilities.

Israel is one of the biggest arms producers in the world and heavily depends on exports. Up to 70 % of Israel's military production is exported, mainly to the Global South and particularly to rogue and authoritarian regimes which use it to commit genocide, ethnic cleansing and other grave human rights violations. Israeli weapons companies market their weapons as "field-tested".

Israel causes harm by exporting its repressive tactics and technologies. Its exports are used to build walls, promote surveillance, enable racial profiling and racist police repression, and to violate the rights of indigenous peoples, migrants and human rights defenders.

INDIA

India's largest student federation to boycott HP for Israeli dealings

India's largest student federation passed a resolution on Saturday to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement that calls for boycotting Hewlett Packard (HP) companies over their well-documented complicity in Israel's grave violations of Palestinian human rights. The four-million-members strong Students Federation of India (SFI) has joined the global campaign to boycott HP. "This means that Hewlett Packard companies now risk losing over four million potential clients in India because of their complicity in Israel's gross violations of Palestinian human rights."

Given that the cheapest HP laptop in India costs about \$300, this means that HP may be losing a potential student market of over \$120 million. "What Palestinians and Indian students are showing is that companies seeking to profit from Israel's military occupation and discriminatory regime face growing popular opposition and risk a serious hit to both their reputations and pocket-books". "HP has provided technology and services

that support Israel's military occupation and racial discrimination policies, including its devastating siege suffocating nearly 2 million Palestinians in Gaza, and illegal settlements built on stolen Palestinian land." In its resolution to boycott HP, SFI condemned Israel's recent violence against unarmed Palestinian protesters in Gaza, where Israel killed at least 121 Palestinians and injured more than 13,000 in just the last two months. It also criticized the current right-wing government in India for its "close security and military ties with Israel" and for having become "the largest arms buyer from Israel."

16 Million-Strong farmer's movement joins the BDS Movement

The largest national organization representing farmers and agricultural workers in India, All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), has announced that it has joined the BDS movement. AIKS is spread across 21 states in India and is over 16 million members strong. AIKS has resolved to:

- Endorse the call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it complies with international law, in order to stand for the rights of the Palestinian people and to resist the corporate takeover of Indian agriculture sector by Israeli companies.
- Denounce and document any cases of Israeli corporate takeover in the Indian agro-sector.
- Raise awareness among Indian farmers to prevent Israel and its corporations from reaping profits in India that finance military occupation and apartheid in Palestine.
- AIKS has actively resisted the corporate takeover of Indian agriculture and the two decades of neoliberal policies which have led to massive indebtedness and farmer suicides.

Arms over masks: India buys weapons from Israel as coronavirus cases spike (Voices from BDS advocates)

India's handling of the coronavirus crisis has been criticised by activists and rights groups after it emerged his government decided to go ahead with an arms deal with Israel worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Israel will supply the Indian military with 16,479 Negev light machine guns, despite growing concerns over the health emergency facing the country of 1.3 billion people. The deal, worth \$116m, came as doctors on the frontline in India continue to complain of a shortage of masks and protective equipment, highlighting concerns that India is ill-prepared to deal with a crisis of this magnitude.

'Why is the government of India choosing to spend massive amounts on military purchases instead of prioritising a corona relief package, medical infrastructure, free healthcare and testing for all?' With concerns rising over the rapid acceleration of the pandemic and the impact it has already had on economies around the world, the thought that the struggling Indian economy could afford to absorb military spending at this juncture has left some reeling.

Academics in the BDS Movement argue that the move to prioritise arms at a time of a crisis was only part of a larger attempt by the BJP-led government to turn India into a security state, like Israel. The Indian administration has also come under fire for the partial communication blockade in Kashmir, which academics and activists argue will have dire consequences for eight million people already living under a military occupation.

BDS wants to reach out to one of the largest film industries in the world: Bollywood

Bollywood has a new role thrust on it, that of being a playground for global geopolitics. In 2018, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's selfie with the Hindi film stars at the Shalom Bollywood event in Mumbai went viral.

Now it is the turn of BDS (Boycott, Divestments, Sanctions), to reach out to one of the largest film industries in the world. However, unlike the Israeli charm offensive that promised Bollywood sops for shooting in Israel, the BDS's counter-offensive was relatively low-key, with three members of the Palestinian National Committee for

BDS arriving in Mumbai last week to quietly engage select members of the film fraternity and sensitize them about the Palestinian cause.

Israel wants to use Hindi films as a tool and a cover for the human rights abuse. This in-your-face attempt to use Indian art to promote the political agenda of the Israeli occupation is an insult to the integrity and self-respect of every Indian artist," says a BDS statement to the industry.

BDS activists say: "At this stage, buying into Israeli propaganda is deeply hurtful. Using culture to whitewash its crimes is Israel's old strategy which furthers its violations against Palestinians...Bollywood becoming a tool for the same is completely going against India's long standing support for Palestine. And it is very important that Bollywood refuses to be this tool for Israeli propaganda," said Ms. Mantovani.

JAPAN

Japan needs to know real aim of BDS before 2020 Olympiad

The BDS (Divest, Boycott and Sanction of Israel) movement has hit Japan. The Japan-based chapter of this organization has kicked off a campaign aimed at punishing Israel – the only democratic nation in the Middle East – serving as a marked contrast to the unifying message Tokyo needs as it prepares to open its arms to the world for the 2020 Olympiad.

Japan BDS' campaign of targeting a single country for discrimination is fundamentally at odds with the Olympic spirit and runs directly counter to Japan's values in the postwar era as a democratic, liberal society that upholds human rights and equality. Japanese government leaders in Tokyo must wake up to the ugly reality of Japan BDS and take a firm stance against this prejudiced and slanderous movement.

The Japan-based chapter of this organization also aims to do damage to the Jewish state by pressuring Japanese companies to avoid doing business with Israel. This will inevitably result in Japan's business community encountering BDS protests and other disruptive activities more frequently as Japan's commercial and tourism relationship with Israel grows. The Japanese business community will need guidance on how to handle this divisive issue.

Upscale Tokyo Store withdraws illegal settlement products

"The upscale Mitsukoshi department store in the Ginza district of Tokyo has withdrawn Israeli settlement products. The store was scheduled to host an event featuring Israeli wines, including wines made in illegal Israeli settlements built on stolen land. But after Japanese civil society raised concerns, Mitsukoshi shortened the event and removed all wines which Japanese BDS activists indicated were made in Israeli settlements... A spokesperson for Palestine Forum — Japan, a network of BDS activists, said: We warmly welcome this principled decision by Mitsukoshi department store to pull products made in illegal Israeli settlements from its shelves. By refusing to sell these products, the store is complying with international law and Japanese foreign policy. It is also respecting human rights and advancing justice and peace".

MALAYSIA

Largest Malaysian University Ends Contract With Puma Over Support for Illegal Israeli Settlements

"Malaysia's largest university, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), has ended a sponsorship deal with global sportswear brand Puma over the company's support for illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory. UiTM, which had a three year contract with Puma as sponsor of the university's football team, confirmed that the contract was not renewed due to Puma's involvement in Israel's human rights abuses.

Puma sponsors the Israel Football Association (IFA), which includes and advocates on behalf of teams in illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian land. Israeli settlements are considered war crimes under international law. Puma's exclusive licensee in Israel, Delta Galil, is listed in the recently-revealed United Nations settlement companies database due to its branches in illegal Israeli settlements".

MYANMAR

Israel's Shameful Role in Myanmar's Rohingya genocide Campaign

Israeli arms and military technology sales to Myanmar have earned Jerusalem scorn. But after Gilor's tweet, Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs surprisingly condemned "the atrocities that took place in the Rakhine region against the Rohingya." Israel previously refused to use the term "Rohingya" seemingly in deference to the Myanmar government that rejects the term and does not recognize the Rohingya as citizens, instead considering them "Bengalis." But this new Israeli statement is still too passive. Most glaringly, it fails to note who committed these "atrocities." Now, as Myanmar faces charges for the world's worst crime - and India, another Israeli ally, passes legislation paving the way towards similar exclusion and violence - it is more necessary than ever that Israeli leaders ensure that the Jewish state and people never facilitate, or even tacitly tolerate, genocide.

Free Rohingya Coalition

The Coalition undertakes and promotes consumer boycotts of goods and services connected with the State of Myanmar. These include, for instance, tourism, sporting, and cultural activities involving associations backed by Myanmar. This campaign is inspired by the success of past anti-apartheid movements and the current BDS (boycott, divestment, sanction) movement focused on Israel's policy of apartheid against Palestinians.

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka for Palestine

@sl4Palestine - An active Social Media community sharing articles and ideas in a Facebook group and on Twitter. They are active in giving each other support and advice.

Challenges

Introduction

OUR MICAH MANDATE

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

~ Micah 6:8

The "Micah Mandate" addresses the question of how people of faith should act in situations of injustice. It's not just Micah. And it's not just a recommendation. We are called over and over in our scriptures to "love one another" and "let justice roll like an everflowing stream." As people of faith, we do work for justice; yet when it comes to Israel and its policies, our advocacy for justice frequently sparks vitriol, hate, and misguided accusations of antisemitism.

This is not accidental. There has been a professional, multi-million dollar effort underway since 2006 to shut down criticism of Israel. Also targeted has been the global BDS movement, likely due to its record of success in churches, on college campuses, and historic victories in academic institutions. There has also been success with corporations complicit in violations of international law and Palestinian human rights. What do we know about this effort? How do we expose its actual motivations and real agenda? How do we heed the call of Micah and "do justice" against this overwhelming tide of well-funded propaganda and public relations efforts?

Navigating the sea of professionally organized and funded campaigns against Palestine solidarity, we come up against at least four hurdles that attempt to throw us off course. By identifying them, we can see them clearly, learn how they function, expose them, and thereby limit their ability to obstruct our work for justice.

They are:

1. Financing
A well-organized multinational, multi-million dollar campaign to fight BDS
2. Weaponization of antisemitism
Accusations of antisemitism by "pro-Israel" groups and individuals, and through proposed legislation against Palestinian rights
3. Racism
The discriminatory and exceptionalizing nature of Zionism, as well as its reflection in White Supremacy
4. Christian Zionism
Dishonesty, the Ecumenical Deal, and the antisemitic ideology of Christian Zionism and finally, what is the endgame?

1. FINANCING

UNLIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES

"Israeli ministry paying for anti-BDS propaganda in major news outlets"

~ Article headline, Jan. 2020

From Israel's low-profile Ministry of Strategic Affairs (formed in 2006), to their spy agency Mossad, to the well-funded schools and huge programs of the Herzliya Institute, to Sheldon Adelson funding the Israeli Right, to the troops of lobbyists working to push through anti-BDS legislation around the world, to the "army of trolls" Israel pays to post Israeli government propaganda on facebook and other social media, the money behind the anti-BDS campaign appears to be a bottomless well. It also includes, directly or indirectly, US government funds and material support from Evangelicals whose Christian Zionist theology gives Israel unquestioning support.

Mairav Zonszein reports on this campaign in the New York Review of Books [links in original]:

This effort, backed by millions of dollars, has systematically quashed advocacy for Palestinians rights in American political discourse. It is why any endorsement of a boycott against Israel—even one narrowly targeting the products of Israeli settlements—can be deemed anti-Semitic and why BDS activists have been placed on blacklists and spied upon.

BDS supporters are working against a massive and powerful tide. Nelson Mandela spoke about perseverance in the face of depraved power, saying "It always seems impossible until it's done." To try and counteract massive forces may appear futile at first, but large and powerful forces have been toppled before, and in recent history in fact. The dismantling of the Soviet Union and Apartheid South Africa are examples from which to draw inspiration. The same can be said of former colonies gaining independence from colonial empires. Britain, France and Spain all held colonies around the world which they had to release, sometimes after violent uprisings, in the 20th Century.

Although unlimited financial resources do provide much power to those who have them, they are not the final word because they do not represent the masses. In regard to Israel, money is part of a top-down behemoth representing the elite and powerful. On the other hand, grassroots movements such as the BDS Movement have people power, which is organic, rooted, and tenacious, even in the face of monied power and interests. Like a moving train, a well-organized movement for justice is hard to derail. The BDS Movement is such a train and with all the people-power behind it, it is steadfastly moving forward.

Speaking about the US civil rights struggle of the 1960s, Lori Ginzberg, professor of history and women's studies at Penn State University states,

I think that then as now, grassroots organizing is the key to making real social change. ... Politicians make changes because there are movements, some of which take extreme positions, that push them. What those movements do is they push ideas onto the agenda and make them legitimate and move things in a direction that can actually result in political change.

As advocates of justice for those whose voices are often silenced, BDS supporters aim to work in coalitions with other justice movements, mobilizing power in ways that no amount of money can match. Ordinary people are doing extraordinary things, catalyzing a movement for real change, and in the process discovering that we are the change we have been waiting for.

An American folk song, repurposed for the US civil rights struggle in the 1960s, reminded activists to "keep your eyes on the prize, and hold on." Similarly today, to stand against the millions of dollars poured into denying Palestinian rights requires steadfastness in our focus on advocacy for justice. The history of other struggles teaches that the work is slow but steady. And that eventually, justice will be done.

Sidebar:

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.

~ Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

American Civil Rights Leader

Keep your eyes on the prize

And hold on!

REBUTTAL

FINANCING AGAINST BDS

The fact that Israel has heavily funded a government program to battle BDS globally speaks to how successful the BDS Movement has been. Israel spends millions of dollars creating alternate facts and narratives to distract from the truth that they are taking and annexing more and more land. The more they spend to stop BDS, the more they prove that BDS is needed. See article. [\[link\]](#)

POEM

— WE —

“We are the ones we been waiting for”

Just listen to yourselves and we will wait no more

No need for another Malcolm or Martin

When you stand ready at the door of greatness

Seeds sewn by Sojourner have now sprouted in her likeness as true

New answers to old questions now lie in the hands of youth

Man or woman in the mirror now serves as your proof

that we are the ones we've been waiting for

Challenge is to realize your worth

But not before we understand our birthright to the throne

Our fate is our own

We are the clones of pharaohs and queens

We do not stand alone

We are the people

To end WAR

We Are Responsible

To conclude the long WAIT

We Acknowledge It's Time - Now

Yes we are the ones we've been waiting for you
A community of self
Individuality the wealth that makes the collective unique
New reality that we hold the answers we seek
We need not lean on the crunch
Our government too much overrated
Our concerns too often debated and debated and debated and debated
Yes we are the one we've been waiting for
Just listen to yourself and we will wait no more
No need for another Malcolm or Martin
when you stand ready at the door of greatness
Seeds sewn by Sojourner have now sprouted in her likeness as truth
New answers to old questions now lie in the hands of youth
Man or woman in the mirror now serves as your proof
that we are the ones we've been waiting for.

(After June Jordan's – "A Poem for South African Women")
Copyright 2008 – Nathan M. Richardson
From the collection "Voices from the Wombs of Wisdom"

2.WEAPONIZATION OF ANTISEMITISM CHARGES

DEFAMATION AND LIBEL OF BDS SUPPORTERS

When the charge of antisemitism is used to censor or quell open debate and the public exchange of critical views on the State of Israel, then it is not exactly communicating a truth, but seeking to rule out certain perspectives from being heard. So whether or not the accusation is true becomes less important than whether or not it is effective. It works in part through stigmatizing and discrediting the speaker, but also through a tactical deployment of slander. After all, the charge can be enormously painful. It does not roll easily off the back; it does not get quickly shaken off, even when one knows it is not true.

~Judith Butler, Jewish American Philosopher

Sometimes referred to as the "new" antisemitism, Proponents seek to label any criticism of the policies of the state of Israel as antisemitic. Accusations of antisemitism are directed at supporters of Palestinian human rights by defenders of Israel as a common tactic to shut down debate. They have even been used in legislative bodies in many countries, such as the May 2019 ruling by the German Parliament labeling BDS as antisemitic. The BDS movement responded forcefully, saying the tactic is "not only anti-Palestinian McCarthyism, it is a betrayal of international law, German democracy and the fight against real anti-Jewish racism."

As with any accusation of racism, if a person or organization is accused of it, the conversation stops because such an attack cannot go unanswered. When it comes to being accused of antisemitism, and rightly so, no one is given the benefit of the doubt. For this reason, even the person or group being wrongly accused of antisemitism must immediately address the accusation and its intent. When intention belies truth, the conversation is derailed; in short, accusations can become diversion tactics by successfully avoiding conversation on the matter at hand: Israel's ongoing record of human rights abuses against Palestinians.

Palestine solidarity is clear on its stand against any form of racism and bigotry, especially antisemitism. The movement for Palestinian rights is a movement for justice; it does not condone any form of racism. Whenever and wherever possible, this must be reiterated and reinforced. Presenting an official statement against all racism serves as a bulwark against detractors who can use defamation as a way to subvert and obstruct any advances in rights for Palestine.

A good example of such a safeguard is the statement from the Israel/Palestine Mission Network (IPMN) of the Presbyterian Church (USA). They begin by condemning all forms of hate and bigotry and in regards specifically to antisemitism, they make a clear distinction between Judaism and Zionism by quoting Jewish Voice for Peace: "Zionism is a political ideology; Judaism and Jewish identity encompass a diversity of religious and secular expressions and a robust, varied set of traditions, cultures, and lived experiences. ... Definitions of antisemitism that treat criticism of Israel or of Zionism as inherently antisemitic are inaccurate and harmful."

The statement continues:

IPMN maintains that as a state, Israel must be held to the same standards as other countries. It must be accountable for its actions under international human rights laws. To hold Israel to a different standard because it is a Jewish state, or to give it a free pass on flagrant violations of international law is a form of exceptionalism that is in fact antisemitic because to consider Jews as better than or worse than other people is antisemitic. ... We conclude that the best way to stand against antisemitism is to stand in solidarity with all struggles for justice against all racism, bigotry, oppression and injustice. Today's heightened moment of focus on human rights presents the challenge to overcome privileging white supremacy and settler colonialism, demanding that we organize across issues, boundaries, and movements to create multicultural, democratic societies in which all people have equal value and equal rights.

The BDS Movement rejects antisemitism explicitly. Yet, strident critics of the movement defer to Natan Sharansky's so-called "3 D Test" to distinguish fair criticism of Israel from unfounded: Does the criticism delegitimize Israel, apply a double standard or demonize it? The New York Times presents both sides:

B.D.S. does all three, its critics say, by questioning Israel's right to exist, and by singling out Israel for its treatment of Israel's Arab citizens when minorities in some countries suffer far more. The columnist Ben-Dror Yemini, a critic of the movement, said B.D.S. supporters also demonize Israel when they portray the country as "the great danger to humanity."

Rebutting the double-standard charge, B.D.S. leaders say that Palestinians fighting for their own rights should not be expected to give equivalent attention to abused minorities elsewhere. And Kenneth Stern, director of Bard College's Center for the Study of Hate, urges a distinction between effect and motivation: Palestinians who feel no ill will toward Jews but yearn for self-determination in the land of their forebears may rightly argue that to disparage that yearning is a form of bigotry.

The “double standard” charge has often been called “What aboutism” by BDS supporters who declare that criticism of Israel cannot be met with questions like “What about Iran?” or “What about China?”, which refer to human rights abuses in other countries. No, human rights abuses in other places are not ok, but Palestinians cannot be put on hold in perpetuity with justice delayed through “what aboutism.” Actually, most of the world neither condones nor stands in silence when it comes to calling out injustice in other countries. With regard to Israel, many governments raise objections to Israeli abuses yet withhold real consequences. Other countries go further; the US for example, actually provides significant financial aid to Israel. This exceptionalizes Israel by putting it in a different class from other human rights abusers, since tax monies are spent to enable that abuse. So one could say there actually is a double-standard, but it’s in Israel’s favor.

As for “delegitimizing” or “demonizing” Israel, supporters of Palestine and BDS argue that Israeli policies do that on their own and don’t need any help. Nathan Thrall, Director of the Arab-Israeli Project at the International Crisis Group, has written about “de-legitimization,” showing how it is a tactic:

Perhaps Israel’s most powerful tool in the campaign against de-legitimization has been to accuse the country’s critics of antisemitism. Doing so required changing official definitions of the term. ...By the [US] state department’s definition, de-legitimization includes “Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, and denying Israel the right to exist”. Thus anti-Zionism — including the view that Israel should be a state of all its citizens, with equal rights for Jews and non-Jews — is a form of de-legitimization and therefore antisemitic.”

It is important to be clear on this: Palestinians want to stay in and return to their historic homeland. They belong to that land and have a right to stay there. They are not de-legitimizing anything or anyone. Not being a Zionist is not a statement of de-legitimizing Israel. It is a commitment to equality, justice and freedom for all people.

On the accusations of “demonization,” Israel is having to defend itself against calls for boycotts by international artists and sports figures and prove itself worthy against calls for sanctions against Israeli sports teams and universities. Just as with apartheid South Africa, Israel is battling a growing negative image in world opinion, even one that draws comparisons of Israeli right wing policies with fascists in Europe, especially Germany in the 1930s and 40s. Drawing such parallels, even when justified, have been classified as “demonization.” In other words, it is not okay to call out Israeli policies that veer towards far-right fascist laws like those that Europe embraced in the 1930s. To do so is to “demonize” Israel.

In these and numerous other ways, legitimate criticism of Israel as a nation state whose laws blatantly discriminate against Palestinians and create an apartheid state, is shut down. Jewish Voice for Peace puts it clearly and succinctly:

Criticism of Jews for being Jews is anti-Semitic; criticism of the state of Israel is not. The Israeli government encourages the dangerous conflation of all Jews with Israel. When Prime Minister Netanyahu claims to represent all Jews, he furthers such misperceptions. Israel does not represent all Jews, and nearly 25% of Israel’s citizens are not Jewish.

Defamation of supporters of Palestinian rights is a tactic for changing the subject. In the interest of justice and equal rights for all, it is critical that we recognize the fraudulent accusations of antisemitism as distractions rather than allowing them to become the main narrative. We must bring the focus back to justice.

REBUTTAL

CHARGES OF ANTISEMITISM

Antisemitism is a serious racist problem that must be addressed, but weaponizing the charge of antisemitism against supporters of Palestinian rights both diminishes the charge itself and discriminates based on identity. i.e. Palestinians. This charge is a distraction to change the subject from the question at hand: Is it a Jewish value to deny human rights to millions of people?

See article by Aaron Freedman. [\[link\]](#)

Sidebar

GETTING IT RIGHT

Criticism of Jews for being Jews is antisemitic.

Criticism of the state of Israel is not antisemitic.

The Israeli government encourages the dangerous conflation of all Jews with Israel.

Israel claims to represent all Jews but Israel does not represent all Jews

Nearly 25% of Israel's citizens are not Jewish.

[\[link to JVP\]](#)

3. ZIONISM

THE DISCRIMINATORY AND EXCEPTIONALIZING NATURE OF ZIONISM

As a Palestinian woman resisting Israel's occupation, racial supremacy and apartheid, I shall continue to reject Zionism as a racist ideology while firmly condemning anti-Jewish bigotry. Our struggle is against all forms of oppression and racism. We target complicity, not identity.

~ Shahd Abusalama

Zionism disregards, disrespects, and discriminates against the indigenous people of Palestine. Unlike the myth suggests, Palestine has never been "a land without a people." Zionism, the political ideology undergirding the state of Israel, has always been about taking as much of the land with as few of the people as possible so as to create a Jewish state. From the founding of Israel as a Jewish state including Ben

Gurion's well-documented original intent, to the land grabs of Ariel Sharon for settlements, to Netanyahu's annexation plans, Zionism has always wanted land, and not its people.

However, despite the plans and hopes of the Zionist founders, the indigenous population has not only not departed or dwindled, but it has remained steadfast, persevered, resisted, and grown in numbers, with millions now as refugees living in different places. There is near parity now in the Jewish and non-Jewish population numbers which Israel claims make non-Jews a "demographic threat." Former Israeli ambassador, Michael Oren, listed the rise of Arab numbers as one of the "seven existential threats" to Israel as early as 2009. By "demographic threat," he meant Arab babies being born.

This blatant racism may have once been unimaginable, but with the rise of white supremacy in the United States and other Western countries, it is now flagrantly out in plain sight. In the US, white supremacists now speak of black and brown babies as demographic threats, and have even acknowledged that they would like to follow the exclusionary model and policies of Israel — in their case privileging white people.

Newsweek reported on Richard Spencer, one of the more recognizable faces of white supremacy in the US: [He] claims to be a 'white Zionist' and has voiced his support for a Jewish homeland. Last year, he told Israeli news network Channel 2 that he wants to establish a white homeland 'just like you [Jews] want a secure homeland in Israel.'

Supporters of Israel's policies and the 2018 Nation State Law declare that BDS is out to "destroy Israel" because it calls for conditions in which Israel would no longer be a Jewish state. What they are saying is that, as a rights-based movement, BDS calls for equal rights for all people. BDS supporters point out that giving equal rights to all would not destroy Israel, but instead would bring justice, and create a new 21st century life without the stigma of settler colonialism and apartheid. Supporters of BDS from South Africa agree and claim that South Africa was not destroyed when the old racist regime was dismantled. Rather, they know that it was improved into a country that strives to be more equal for all its citizens, even as it grapples with the difficulties of a day to day diverse reality.

Shutting down non-violent protests (BDS) on the basis of maintaining a regime and nation state that privileges one group of people over all others is not sustainable in the 21st century. For people of conscience, it is impossible to support such outdated concepts of nationhood as one that justifies peoples' rights based on whether they are Jewish or not. Fully 25% of people living within Israel's 1967 borders are not Jewish, and 50% are not Jewish if you consider all the population who live under the control of the government of Israel (including the West Bank and Gaza).

For this reason, it is more important than ever to support the rights-based approach called for by the now-worldwide BDS Movement. Israel today has unabashedly codified itself into an apartheid state that perpetuates injustice, inequality, and intentional human suffering. It is time to support human rights for all people of historic Palestine..

REBUTTAL

ZIONISM

Zionism is exclusionary because it makes exceptions for Jews only. It is a political ideology that led to colonial settlement in a land that already had a large population of indigenous people. Zionism raises Jewish people above all others, declaring that God has given land exclusively to them; that the land belongs to God and God wants all people to flourish. This exceptionalism of Jews results in outright racism.

sidebar

RACISM IN OPEN SIGHT

...However, despite the plans and hopes of the Zionist founders, the indigenous population has not only not departed or dwindled, but it has remained steadfast, persevered, resisted, and grown in numbers, with millions now as refugees living in different places. There is near parity now in the Jewish and non-Jewish population numbers which Israel claims make non-Jews a “demographic threat.” Former Israeli ambassador, Michael Oren, listed the rise of Arab numbers as one of the “seven existential threats” to Israel as early as 2009. By “demographic threat,” he meant Arab babies being born.

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4. CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

CHRISTIAN ZIONISM: OVERT AND COVERT

[W]e see the theology of Christian Zionism, which encourages Jewish return to Israel as a means to achieve Christian redemption, as... founded on antisemitic interpretations of scripture.

~Jewish Voice for Peace statement on antisemitism [link]

The antisemitic ideology of Christian Zionism, which is an ideology of false friendship with Israel, has made millions of unwitting (and also aware) Christians complicit with Israeli human rights violations. Through groups like John Hagee’s CUFI, Christians United for Israel, self-identified evangelicals provide unlimited funds and support for Israel, in an attempt to bring about the return of the Messiah, at which time, if Jews do not convert to Christianity (in the end times), they will be eternally damned to hell.

In order to drum up support for Israel so that the Messiah can return, Christian Zionists attack supporters of Palestinian rights in their local communities, accusing them of being antisemitic in local papers and in community events. Through libel and slander, these Christian Zionists not only behave in an un-Christian manner, but they also support an ongoing human rights catastrophe in Palestine. This ideology is not confined to Britain where it started, and the US where it has overtaken numbers of “mainline” churches, but it has spread through “missionary work” to the developing world and is rampant in Africa and some parts of Asia where US missionaries proselytize their misguided ideology.

There is no panacea for such rampant misrepresentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but it is imperative that this false ideology be confronted, called out, and challenged at every possible turn. It is important to lay out the parameters of how and why it is erroneous and unacceptable, and further, it should be publicly noted that its end-goal is intolerable.

A worldview that holds all the land that Palestinians live on needs to be “under control of the Jews to bring about the Second Coming of the Messiah” is unholy. The belief that Jews must convert to Christianity or be condemned to eternal damnation is antisemitic. It is nothing short of blasphemous for Christian Zionists to defame those Christian activists who live into the gospel mandate for justice.

Additionally, there is a similar strain of such support for Israel in mainline Christianity, both in the Protestant and in the Catholic traditions. Since it is not in plain sight and is not explicit in ideology, but is evident in practice, it is more difficult to identify. In *Zionism and the Quest for Justice in the Holy Land*, editors Donald Wagner and Walter Davis describe this kind of Christian Zionism as more insidious because of its more obscure nature. Further, Wagner and Davis discuss “the influence of the Zionist narrative as having acquired dominance in the media, in political discourse, and in the Protestant churches.” In the same volume, theologians Rosemary and Herman Ruether have written extensively about the influence of Zionism on the Catholic Church.

Understandably, after WWII and the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust, “mainline” Christianity began to pay for its sins of complicity through an unquestioned support of Israel. Rightly, the Church at large needed to correct course and move away from the Replacement Theology that contributed to the Nazi Holocaust. Because the sins were so great, so was the likelihood of overreaching. Christian guilt set up what’s become known as The Ecumenical Deal in which Christians pay for their sins that resulted in the Nazi Holocaust by remaining silent on the sins of Israel. Jewish Liberation Theologian Marc Ellis, calling for an end to this deal, describes it this way:

I have argued that the interfaith ecumenical dialogue has become a deal. By deal, I mean that the desire for better Jewish-Christian relations has morphed into Jews holding up Israel as a post-Holocaust trophy and Christians’ endless repentance for their sin of historic anti-Semitism demanding silence on Israel’s abuse of Palestinians. ... In 1988, I called for the end of the interfaith ecumenical deal. Since Jews hold Christians hostage on Israel and Palestine, Christians should cease participating in this obvious hypocrisy.

With unquestioning support and by turning a blind eye to Israel’s human rights abuses, churches around the world who don’t speak out now are ironically repeating their sins of silence during WWII, except this time, it’s at the expense of Palestinians.

REBUTTAL

CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

Zionism is exclusionary because it makes exceptions for Jews only. It is a political ideology that led to colonial settlement in a land that already had a large population of indigenous people. Zionism raises Jewish people above all others, declaring that God has given land exclusively to them; that the land belongs to God and God wants all people to flourish. This exceptionalism of Jews results in outright racism.

Sidebar

LEARN MORE

Christian Zionism merges theology and politics. It teaches that the secular State of Israel is a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy that began when European Jews started moving to Palestine in the 1800s, and continued as Israel became a nation in 1948. Christian Zionists believe and claim that modern Israel is a continuation of Biblical Israel and therefore should enjoy special privileges. They declare that it is the responsibility of Christians to support the State of Israel and its policies.

ChristianZionism.org

CONCLUSION

WHAT IS THE END GAME?

With a peace process and a two-state solution in the rear view mirror, and settler colonialism in full view, the endgame is not about destroying Israel or even dismantling Zionism. Rather the endgame is to achieve equal rights, freedom and justice for Palestinians who have for generations been deprived of their land, property, and human rights.

It is a painful irony that Palestinians have been humiliated and persecuted since the very time when new nations were beginning to emerge from under the yoke of colonialism, subjugation and occupation. As political analyst Marwan Bishara has said, what is needed now is “changing Israel's calculus, not defeating it, or destroying it. ... This is how major powers gave up their colonialism and how South Africa ended its system of apartheid. They were forced to reconsider the calculus of gain and loss.”

What Bishara is saying is that it is not in Israel's long term interest to continue holding half the population it controls without their human rights. And it is not in Israel's benefit to rule through apartheid with two sets of laws, as its 2018 Nation State Law has codified. History has shown that people will rise up and demand freedom and justice from tyranny and Israel is not immune from such outcomes.

It is time for people of faith to stand witness for justice, in spite of the overwhelmingly heavy tolls. Currently attached to prophetic witness regarding Israel's human rights abuses. In his foreword to a book on Zionism and its relation to Christianity, American theologian and Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann, acknowledges the cost attached:

There is now an extensive literature... that shows how Christians are held in hock by accusations of anti-Semitism if they criticize Israel, or by a fear of such accusations that might come. It is clear now, as it could not have been clear in the 40s and 50s, that a critical stance toward the State of Israel is now an important matter, not only for the sake of the Palestinians, but for the sake of justice and security in the region. ... Of course the matter is complex, but for a beginning, imagination must catch up with the realities on the ground.

The pressure against any new imagination is immense. I know only a little of it but enough of it. When I urged in print that Braverman's book [criticizing Israel] merits positive attention, I received a thirty-minute scolding and reprimand from a friend, a highly respected professional advocate for Jewish-Christian relations. This little experience is not important. It is enough, however, to permit me to sense how important this reconsideration is, and how much is now required to bring our imagination into critical contact with new historical reality.

Brueggemann tells his readers and students about the dawn of "a new reality" regarding conversations on Israel and Palestine, and maybe finally ending the complicity of the Ecumenical Deal. And he wisely concludes that as far as the security of Israel is concerned, "in the long run, security depends on justice."

As people of faith, we are called upon to pursue justice. The Ecumenical Deal must end. Israel must be held to the same standard as other nations under international law. BDS is a growing non-violent global movement toward this end. In this kairos moment, we must confront any and all obstacles and be steadfast in our support of this call for justice.

LEGAL

1.THROUGH A LEGAL LENS

How is the BDS Movement connected to international law?

JUSTICE

for all refugees

FREEDOM

from occupation and apartheid

EQUALITY

for all people living under Israeli control

PAGES IN THIS LEGAL SECTION

INTERNATIONAL LAW

What is the law? To be effective, advocates will need some familiarity with international law and how it applies to Israel/Palestine.

SOME BDS TARGETS

Starting a BDS campaign with the list of 112 companies that the UN has identified as profiting from Israeli human rights violations.

ISRAELI VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

Here are the areas in which Israel violates international law in Palestinian lives: social, economic, health, and political arenas.

LAWFARE

Using the law as a weapon of war: Israel advocates around the world have been using the law and the courts to make pro-Palestine advocacy illegal.

BOYCOTTS

School and university campus advocacy and actions, sporting events and cultural events are a context for BDS and are also subject to legal and policy issues.

ISRAELI LAWS

Israel has been formalizing and codifying anti-Palestinian language into its laws, discriminating against Palestinians "legally" through its laws.

SEVEN STEPS TO KEEP AT IT!

1

BDS involves solidarity actions which cover a number of human rights issues under international law, as noted previously. Deciding which aspects of BDS to engage in within your context can be further enhanced by knowing what other legal debates or cases and advocacy on human rights concerns are important in your country's history or current situation. Use those to your advantage when exploring the legal issues of BDS advocacy.

2

Do not allow legal intimidation or chilling tactics to stop your group's research, education, advocacy or partnership on boycott, divestment or sanctions. Be strategic and careful but direct and firm when intimidation occurs.

3

Seek out lawyers who have human rights, investment, taxation, constitutional rights and protections expertise in your country/context as much as possible, including those who have worked on other areas of civil society and rights or freedom of speech, boycott, economic resistance and freedom of religion areas.

4

Do the research and engage informed and supportive legal opinions on laws and policies in your specific municipality and nation related not only to BDS but to a wide variety of human rights and freedoms as defined within the body of law and cases related to your context.

5

Know your individual rights in your country, region or municipality related to freedom of speech and assembly, in particular, and other policies that may come into play as your group plans and enacts boycotts, advocates for divestment or seeks sanctions related to international law violations related to Palestine and Israel.

6

Solicit advice with regard to laws related to investments and financial instruments or corporations as economic tools according to your country's legal and judicial history. This is part of understanding how those investments impact Palestinian rights and the calls for justice under international law.

7

While BDS advocacy and actions are very much shaped by local law and legal history or contexts, engage with activists globally for support and strategic wisdom in handling these issues.

WORKING FOR JUSTICE THROUGH NON-VIOLENT TACTICS

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement is an expression of non-violent resistance in response to the colonial settler policies of the State of Israel, including military occupation as defined by international law, land annexation, refusal to recognize the rights of refugees and apartheid laws in both the occupied territories and applied to Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel.

LEARNING THE LEGAL LANDSCAPE THROUGH BDS VICTORIES

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) are successful tactics in a larger movement for equal rights. BDS impacts policies, products and perceptions on Palestine and the violations of international law by the State of Israel.

How does a group decide what to focus on in a BDS action?

Growth of a Movement

Explore the actions that have shaped the Palestinian-led, global Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement for freedom, justice, and equality by using a powerful visual timeline tool by Visualizing Palestine showing the victories by BDS.

Open Timeline Tool. (large data file, opens slowly)

Your organization can use this tool to see some of the global wins and challenges over the last eight years. Move the cursor over the dots or by clicking on the other icon next to the green dot on the downloaded page, a case-by-case listing of victories drop down. Take the time to study some of the cases as your group is considering what BDS advocacy it wants to undertake.

See Visualizing Palestine for more tools on resistance. [\[link\]](#)

There have been many victories in the fifteen years since the civil society call to BDS was issued. What the Palestinian solidarity movement has learned in those years is: BDS works!

Extraordinary efforts on the part of Israeli and international Zionist organizations to pressure governments into challenging or legislating against only demonstrate how effective it has been in resisting and raising awareness of the apartheid policies of the State of Israel.

Mapping the growth of the movement shows that BDS can be taken up in a variety of ways:

- From boycotting targeted products grown or manufactured in illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian land up to a full boycott of all Israeli products.
- Boycotting financial institutions or companies which fund the State of Israel's colonial settler policies and apartheid. These have included legal challenges to tax laws and misappropriation of donations.
- Boycotting academic, entertainment, sport and arts programs in Israel or with Israeli institutions in protest of the State of Israel's on-going oppression of Palestinians, including legal challenges to contractual arrangements.
- Divesting stocks or other financial instruments from companies that profit from the occupation of Palestine including challenging companies that violate their own policies on human rights and business ethics.
- Legally challenging attempts to silence free speech on campuses or outlaw pro-Palestinian student organizations and their programs. This includes the European Court of Human rights decision in June 2020 in the case that stated that the French government's silencing of French BDS activists violated the EU convention on freedom of expression.
- Influencing and advocating with national or state/provincial governments to impose government sanctions on Israel or Israeli organizations/companies, such as the international movement opposing the continuing annexation of Palestinian lands by the Israeli government.

Sidebar

A RADICALLY JUST FUTURE

"We need a more robust Palestinian politics that guides [the law] and is able to articulate what freedom is, what the future is and to use the law in the service of that vision." ~ Noura Erakat

Palestinian American legal scholar and human rights attorney

-see full interview in The New Arab.

2. INTERNATIONAL LAW

Humanitarian law and the human rights covenants, policies and interpretations are closely interrelated. This page is a listing of many human rights policies from the United Nations which can be used in supporting BDS actions as part of international law.

LEARN MORE...

HELPFUL RESOURCES [links]

IMEU – PDF: Are the Palestinian Territories Occupied?

IMEU – PDF: Israel's Blockade of Gaza: Is it Legal?

IMEU – PDF: The Right of Return and Palestinian Refugees

IMEU – PDF: Israel, Gaza, and International Law

BADIL – PDF: 1948 Palestinian Refugees and the Right of Return: International Law Analysis

Birzeit – PDF: Advocating for Palestinian Rights in Conformity with International Law (Birzeit University Institute of Law)

ICAHN – PDF: International Law and House Demolitions

JADALIYYA – PDF: Is Gaza Still Occupied and Why Does It Matter?

NAD – PDF: Claims Resolution Under International Law

OHCHR – Website: International Human Rights Law

The most consistent and universal demand among advocates for justice in Israel/Palestine is that Israel should comply with international law. Therefore, to be effective, advocates will need some familiarity with international law and how it applies to issues in Israel/Palestine. ... to read in full, see: Palestine Portal

Further commentary on violations of Palestinian rights, al Shabaka:
The Escalation of Israeli Collective Punishment of Palestinians

LAWS ON THE BOOKS

FULL LANGUAGE AT UNITED NATIONS [links]

Hague Convention II (1899)

United Nations Charter (1945)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

Geneva Convention IV (1949)

Additional Protocols to Geneva Convention IV (1977)

Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – Full (1966)

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Full (1966)

International Convention on Crime of Apartheid – Full (1973)

International Court of Justice, Advisory Opinion, Separation Wall, 2004 – Summary

International Court of Justice, Advisory Opinion 2004 – Full, English and French

UN Press Release – ICJ_Advisory Opinion_2004

UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (1948)

UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967)

UN Security Council Resolution 252 (1968)

UN Security Council Resolution 267 (1969)

UN Security Council Resolution 338 (1973)

UN Security Council Resolution 446 (1979)

UN Security Council Resolution 452 (1979)

UN Security Council Resolution 471 (1980)

UN Security Council Resolution 476 (1980)

UN Security Council Resolution 478 (1980)

UN Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016)

IN FURTHER DETAIL

The human rights movement grew out of the disasters of World War II and is at the basis of international law theory and practice. Individuals as well as nations have rights that are not negotiable. Basic civil and political rights of individuals and nations are part of Section 3 (in list below), and include economic, social and cultural rights.

Among the rights of nations are:

- the right to self determination
- the right to own, trade, and dispose of their property freely, and not be deprived of their means of subsistence

Among the rights of individuals are:

- the right to legal recourse when their rights have been violated, even if the violator was acting in an official capacity
- the right to life
- the right to liberty and freedom of movement
- the right to equality before the law
- the right to presumption of innocence til proven guilty
- the right to appeal a conviction
- the right to be recognized as a person before the law
- the right to privacy and protection of that privacy by law
- freedom of thought, conscience, and religion
- freedom of opinion and expression
- freedom of assembly and association

quoted from:

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

See also

Complete List of Human Rights Issues by topic

The Core International Human Rights Instruments and their monitoring bodies

And see list below for full International Human Rights system. This list on UN page here.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM

1.1 Exhaustion of Local Remedies

1.2 Disability Rights at the International Level

2. THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS (ICCPR)

2.1 Review of provisions

2.2 Reporting Procedure Under the ICCPR

2.3 Emergency procedure Under the ICCPR

2.4 Individual Communication Procedure

3. THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (ICESCR)

3.1 Review of provisions

3.2 1503 Procedure Under the ICESCR

4. THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

4.1 Review of provisions

4.2 Reporting Procedure

4.3 Thematic Consideration of Issues

4.4 Missions

5. THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

5.1 Review of Provisions

5.2 Reporting Procedure

5.3 Exceptional Reporting Procedure

5.4 Complaint Procedure

6. THE CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE, AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN AND DEGRADING TREATMENT AND PUNISHMENT

6.1 Review of provisions

6.2 Reporting Procedure

6.3 Investigative procedure

6.4 Individual Complaints Procedure

7. THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)

7.1 The Complaint Procedure

7.2 ILO Provision on the Rights of the Migrant Worker

8. OTHER NORMS & STANDARDS

8.1 Other International Norms and standards

9. OTHER INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS

9.1 Other International Mechanisms including status of women

10. HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW

10.1 Persons with Disabilities and Armed Conflicts

10.2 Human Rights in Times of Emergency

10.3 Civilian Persons Hors de Combat

10.4 Special Protection for the Wounded and Sick

10.5 Victims of Land Mines and Armed Conflicts

CASES AT THE ICC NOW

PENDING CASES AT THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT RELATED TO PALESTINE

All related motions, findings and pre-trial decisions can be found at this link, which has been updated as of June 2020.

Also available is a record of ICC Pre-trial actions and submissions, April 2020 related to claims that the ICC can hear claims against the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza.

The role of the Rome Statute and the signing of that by the government of Palestine allows standing for Palestine in filing cases alleging violations of international law by Israel.

On 1 January 2015, the Government of Palestine lodged a declaration under article 12(3) of the Rome Statute accepting the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) over alleged crimes committed "in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, since June 13, 2014". On 2 January 2015, the Government of Palestine acceded to the Rome Statute by depositing its instrument of accession with the UN Secretary-General. The Rome Statute entered into force on 1 April 2015.

Background:

In 2009, the Palestine Authority lodged an ad hoc declaration to the ICC accepting the jurisdiction of the Court for crimes committed since 2002. For three years the cases remained pending until the United Nations could determine the status of Palestine within the United Nations as the basis for the ICC having jurisdiction in the cases.

On 29 November 2012, UN General Assembly resolution 67/19 passed, upgrading Palestine to "a non-member observer state" status in the United Nations.[3] The change in status was a "de facto" recognition of the statehood of Palestine.

Joint Open Letter to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court:
Time to Investigate Crimes in Palestine, Time for Justice

in dropdown menu:

3. [BDS TARGETS]

PROFITING FROM APARTHEID AND RACISM

UN OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS LIST OF COMPANIES DOING BUSINESS WITH ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

UN rights office issues report on business activities related to settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

- Read the UN press release.
- List of 112 companies profiting from Israeli human rights violations. (page 7)
- full report available at bottom of this page.

One of the most important recent developments in sanctions (the S in BDS) happened in 2020 within the United Nations human rights struggle on illegal Israeli settlements in Palestine and the companies in Israel and internationally doing business in those settlements. The international civil society and faith-based movements has already been responding to this issue with boycotts and divestment advocacy and actions, including key divestment and boycott policy votes taken by those organizations. The following interpretation of both the UN resolutions regarding the list are taken from publications from the United Nations agency.

This list also provides guidance to BDS action groups with regard to companies to be considered in local/national/international actions, as well as part of the educational materials that might be produced in regional contexts.

Of the 112 business entities identified in the report, 94 are domiciled in Israel and 18 in six other States. During the complex process of drawing up the database, the Office consulted the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, and held widespread discussions with numerous States, civil society organizations, think tanks, academics and others, as well as having extensive interactions with the companies themselves.

The report makes clear that the reference to these business entities is not, and does not purport to be, a judicial or quasi-judicial process. While the settlements as such are regarded as illegal under international law, this report does not provide a legal characterization of the activities in question, or of business enterprises' involvement in them. Any further steps with respect to the continuation of this mandate will be a matter for the Member States of the Human Rights Council, which will consider the report during the Council's next session, beginning on 24 February.

Human Rights Council resolution 31/36, adopted on 24 March 2016, requested the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to produce a report to follow up on the 2013 report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (A/HRC/22/63). The resolution defined the parameters of the current report by

reference to ten specific activities listed in Paragraph 96 of the Fact-Finding Mission's report. Human Rights Council resolution.

The report released on February 12, 2020, sets out conclusions following further communications with business entities, as well as a thorough review and assessment of all information available. It identifies 112 business entities which the UN Human Rights Office, on the basis of the information it has gathered, has reasonable grounds to conclude have been involved in one or more of the specific activities referenced in Human Rights Council resolution 31/36.

To read or download the UN report on business activities related to settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory see below. [pdf for download]

4. ISRAELI VIOLATIONS

International Law on Key Israeli Violations

Violations of international law and human rights cover numerous areas of Palestinian social, economic, health, and political arenas.

“No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited.”

Geneva Convention IV, Article 33

THE MATERIAL BELOW IS TAKEN FROM KAIROS-USA'S PALESTINE PORTAL:

Below is a brief, non-comprehensive review of the specific applications of the Fourth Geneva Convention and other instruments of international law to some key issues in Israel/Palestine. Information for this article is derived from “Faith Under Occupation,” a publication by the World Council of Churches, the AFSC publication “Life Under Occupation,” and other sources. Read also on Palestine Portal.

More: The Escalation of Israeli Collective Punishment of Palestinians [link]

EACH VIOLATION LISTED BELOW CAN BE SEEN INTERSECTIONALLY

The areas listed in this section provide numerous examples of violations of international law directly related to the experiences of Palestinian oppression. Any one item listed can be a focus of a variety of advocacy initiatives, including a BDS action.

At the same time, many contexts, populations and communities also experience similar or various oppressions. The common experiences produce intersectional justice solidarity. It is important to “center” Palestine and Palestinian voices, but intersectionality around human rights violations provides an opportunity for education, advocacy, resistance and protest around shared concerns.

Defining intersectionality

The concept of ‘intersectionality’ has been defined as “intersectional oppression [that] arises out of the combination of various oppressions which, together, produce something unique and distinct from any one form of discrimination standing alone....” An intersectional approach takes into account the historical, social and political context[s] and recognizes the unique experience of the individual based on the intersection of all relevant grounds. This approach allows the particular experience of discrimination, based on the confluence of grounds involved, to be acknowledged and remedied.

~from "An introduction to the intersectional approach"

Ontario Human Rights Commission, Canada

APPLICATION OF 4TH GENEVA CONVENTION AND OTHER LAWS

LAND CONFISCATIONS

UN Security Council Resolution 242 (22 November 1967) calls upon Israel to withdraw its forces from land that it claimed during the 1967 war (the West Bank including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights & the Sinai Peninsula), and the inadmissibility of acquisition of land by force.

According to Article 46, Hague Convention II, an occupying power cannot confiscate private property.

“Grave breaches...shall be...extensive destruction and appropriation of property which are not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly.”

Geneva Convention IV, Article 147

SETTLEMENTS

“The occupying power shall not deport or transfer members of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”

Geneva Convention IV, Article 49

This means that colonization of occupied territory is prohibited. The occupying power cannot confiscate land in the occupied territory for the sole purpose of establishing settlements for its nationals.

In several resolutions – most recently in UN SC 2334 in December 2016 – the UN Security Council has reminded Israel of this and described its settlement enterprise as a “flagrant violation of international law.”

HOME DEMOLITIONS

Geneva Convention IV, Article 53 prohibits an occupying power from destroying any property unless it is absolutely necessary for military operations.

“Grave breaches...shall be...extensive destruction and appropriation of property which are not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly.”

Geneva Convention IV, Article 147

Objects that are essential for the survival of the population (e.g. water cisterns and sewage systems) should not be attacked, destroyed, removed, or be rendered useless.

Additional Protocol I to Geneva Convention IV, Article 54

FORCED DISPLACEMENTS

“Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive.”

Geneva Convention IV, Article 49

REFUGEES

UN Resolution 194, Article 11 (11 December 1948) resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible;

Geneva Convention IV, Article 49 prohibits individual or mass forcible transfers from an occupied territory to any other territory, occupied or not. Deportations outside the occupied territory and transfers within the occupied territory are identified as grave breaches.

“Everyone has the right to leave any country including his own and to return to his country.”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 13

WATER AND SANITATION

“Access to safe water is a fundamental human need and therefore a basic human right.”

Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary General

On 2010, the UN Human Rights Council recognized the right to water and sanitation as human rights, as they are indispensable for the full enjoyment of the right to life, the right to health and the right to dignity. Under international humanitarian law, an occupying power is responsible for the welfare of the civilian population and must ensure that civilians are provided with or allowed to secure the basic needs and objects indispensable for their survival including food, water, medical supplies and shelter. Under the fourth Geneva Convention, Israel must ensure Palestinians’ access to drinking water, water for personal hygiene and sanitation (Articles 55 and 56, Geneva Convention IV).

Under international human rights and humanitarian law (HL), the occupied people have the right to their own natural resources. Under IHL, water, as a natural resource, is protected and should be preserved. Although the occupying power may use natural resources and enjoy its fruits (Article 55, Hague Convention II), the use and the extraction of water resource in an occupied territory may not be excessive, abusive, wasteful or neglectful. The occupying power should never damage or diminish the property itself. It may use natural resources as long as it is not detrimental to their capital and must not over exploit the resources. Furthermore, any use of water by the occupying power must be to cover the expenses of the occupation and/or for the benefit of the local population (which does not include settlers). It is prohibited to use the natural resources from an occupied territory for the enrichment of the occupying power and/or citizens and companies. Discrimination in the allocation of water resources is prohibited.

FOOD, MEDICAL CARE, HUMANITARIAN AID

To the fullest extent of the means available to it, the Occupying Power has the duty of ensuring the food and medical supplies of the population; it should, in particular, bring in the necessary foodstuffs, medical stores and other articles if the resources of the occupied territory are inadequate.

Geneva Convention IV, Article 55

If the whole or part of the population of an occupied territory is inadequately supplied, the Occupying Power shall agree to relief schemes on behalf of said population, and shall facilitate them by all the means at its disposal...All Contracting Parties shall permit the free passage of these consignments and guarantee their protection.

Geneva Convention IV, Article 59

JERUSALEM

UN Security Council Resolution 252 “declares invalid” Israel’s acts to unify Jerusalem as a Jewish capital, and UN Resolution 476 reiterates that Israel’s claims to East Jerusalem are “null and void.”

The 2004 International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on the Separation Wall reaffirms that legislative and administrative measures taken by Israel as the occupying power that have changed the status of Jerusalem are not valid since they violate international law.

[The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial arm of the United Nations. The ICJ settles disputes between states and gives advisory opinions on international legal issues referred to it by the UN.]

According to international law, East Jerusalem is occupied territory. Land cannot be acquired by means of annexation, as the annexation by use of force is contrary to international law: Article 2(4), UN Charter.

See more on this subject in *The Status of Jerusalem in International Law* from the NAD.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

The family unit is protected in Article 46, Hague Convention II and Article 27, Geneva Convention IV. Civilians are at all times entitled to respect for their persons, honour, family rights, religious convictions, and manners and customs.

“The widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children.”

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 10 (ratified by Israel in 1991).

Impediments of family reunification also violate the prohibition against forced transfer in Article 49, Geneva Convention IV, as it forces protected people outside the occupied territory.

THE SEPARATION WALL

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) Ruling: (9 July 2004) issued an ‘Advisory Opinion’ stating that the wall built on West Bank land including East Jerusalem, is illegal. The Advisory opinion called for construction of it to be stopped immediately, due to its route which runs deep into the West Bank and East-Jerusalem. The Court related to the construction of the barrier as a policy as a policy that contributes to displacement, impeded the Palestinian right to self-determination and is “tantamount to annexation”, which is forbidden under international law.

Adding that the West Bank wall violates Palestinians’ right to freedom of movement as well as other human rights (rights to health, education, work, etc.), the court concluded that: “Israel is under an obligation to immediately terminate its breaches of international law; to cease the works of construction of the wall being built in the oPt including in and around East Jerusalem; to dismantle the structure placed; and to make reparation for all damages caused by the wall.”

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP, MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

Israel has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, which provides that “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.” Movement restrictions that impede access to religious institutions -and are not necessary for the maintenance of public order – infringe on the rights of the Palestinian population to freedom of religion and worship, according to Article 46, Hague Convention II; Article 58, Geneva Convention IV, and Article 75, Additional Protocol I to Geneva Convention IV.

The right to freedom of movement provides that people are entitled to move freely within the borders of the state, to leave any country and to return to their country.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 13 and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 12

Movement is a prerequisite for accessing basic needs such as healthcare, education and government institutions; work places; maintaining social, cultural and family connections etc. Restrictions imposed by the Israeli government impact most aspects of Palestinian life and violate many of their basic rights and benefits under international law, such as the right to access medical services (Article 16 and 56 Geneva Convention IV), religious institutions (Article 27, Geneva Convention IV; Article 46 Hague Convention II), family members (Article 26 and 27, Geneva Convention IV; Article 46 Hague Convention II) and educational institutions (Article 50, Geneva Convention IV).

STANDARD OF LIVING, EMPLOYMENT, HUMANE TREATMENT

“Protected persons who, as a result of the war, have lost their gainful employment, shall be granted the opportunity to find paid employment...Where a Party to the conflict applies to a protected person methods of control which result in his being unable to support himself, and especially if such a person is prevented for reasons of security from finding paid employment on reasonable conditions, the said Party shall ensure his support and that of his dependents.”

Geneva Convention IV, Article 39

“Protected persons are entitled, in all circumstances, to respect for their persons, their honour, their family rights, their religious convictions and practices, and their manners and customs. They shall at all times be humanely treated, and shall be protected especially against all acts of violence or threats thereof and against insults and public curiosity.”

Geneva Convention IV, Article 27

5. LAWFARE

Using the law as a weapon of war

ATTACKING BDS THROUGH ACCUSATIONS OF ANTISEMITISM

DE-LEGITIMIZING BDS EVEN IF IT IS LEGAL

One of the charges leveled against boycott, divestment and sanctions is that it is antisemitic. This is a tool used to de-legitimize BDS, even though BDS is supported by international law.

Backgrounder on Efforts to Redefine Antisemitism as a Means of Censoring Criticism of Israel [LINK]

Palestine Legal, a USA-based NGO has prepared this background paper which may be helpful in other global contexts. While it cites US laws, the basic legal principles can be applied in other international situations.

Those who advocate against Palestine use the International Holocaust Remembrance Association's (IRHA) guidelines to undercut BDS and challenge definitions.

The IRHA has actively promoted and worked legislatively in the global context to have countries adopt their "working definition" of antisemitism which effectively makes any criticism of the policies of the State of Israel an "antisemitic" action. It has encouraged the use of this definition to undercut pro-BDS activities, policies and legislation under the guise of stopping the expansion of antisemitism hate speech, human rights violations and discrimination and crimes against humanity.

In response, 240 Jewish & Israeli scholars, responding to the German Bundestag's attack on BDS in 2019: "The three main goals of BDS – ending the occupation, full equality to the Arab citizens of Israel and the right of return of Palestinian refugees – adhere to international law... We are shocked that demands for equality and compliance with international law are considered anti-Semitic".

Fact Sheet by IRHA on antisemitism definition

Here is critique of the IRHA working definition in the context of Palestinian human rights movements, including BDS.

BDS: In the crosshairs of human rights colonialism

A recent UN report contributes to Israeli exploitation of human rights discourse to justify oppression in Palestine.

All organizations working on BDS-related advocacy should be aware of this definition and the advocacy of IRHA in their respective governments. Here are some of the governmental actions which have taken place as a result of the IRHA definition advocacy. Most of these contexts are either European or North American.

It is strongly encouraged that further research into the advocacy of applying the IRHA definition to one's country or local context (including municipalities) be part of the legal dimensions of a BDS advocacy or action program.

Cited from the website of IRHA www.holocaustremembrance.com:

The Working Definition of Antisemitism was adopted by the IHRA in May 2016.

To date, the working definition has been adopted or endorsed by a group of governments and bodies listed here.

Sidebar:

SEE OUR SECTION ON CHALLENGES

Sometimes referred to as the “new” antisemitism, Proponents seek to label any criticism of the policies of the state of Israel as antisemitic. Accusations of antisemitism are directed at supporters of Palestinian human rights by defenders of Israel as a common tactic to shut down debate. They have even been used in legislative bodies in many countries, such as ...

GENERAL LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

APPLICABLE IN ANY GLOBAL CONTEXT

Legal and constitutional issues have arisen around the BDS Movement. Nations and political jurisdictions may have different views on the BDS Movement, and if legal issues arise in your context, you should check with human rights and/or constitutional lawyers in your jurisdiction.

There are laws or resolutions which shape the framework for engaging in BDS actions in all types of jurisdictions, including municipalities, provinces or states and nations. BDS is a classic political expression of which some particular state disapproves, and this violates many countries’ constitutional or other foundational legal documents’ provisions.

Palestine Solidarity Campaign UK 2020 court case

Palestine Solidarity Campaign defeats UK Government over pensions divestment

Financial Times: Westminster loses battle over pension fund investments

US legal advice which may be applicable as points of reference or strategy

- Legal and Tactical Guide, Palestinian Human Rights advocacy in the US
- Backgrounder on Efforts to Redefine Antisemitism as a Means of Censoring Criticism of Israel
- The Palestine Exception to Free Speech: A Movement Under Attack in the US

Other international BDS legal actions (select citations)

- Legal action taken against first BDS motion by Latin American municipality (2016)
- Joint Struggle is the way forward as India adopts Israeli methods of repression

Rise of hate speech against Palestinians (in contrast to antisemitism)

- The Rise in Hate Speech Targeting Palestinians in Israeli Social Media

An additional resource to be used cautiously:

- Wikipedia page on BDS
 - NOTE: The citations on the Wikipedia page on Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions are subject to user editing. For this reason, further verification by users is needed.
-

6. ISRAELI LAWS

Codifying discrimination into law

ENTRY INTO ISRAEL

"AMENDMENT 28" TO LAWS ON ENTRY INTO ISRAEL

In March 2017, the Israeli Knesset enacted an amendment to the Entry into Israel laws that govern visa entries into the country. [all below are links]

This is an English translation of that law, but only an interpretation of the Hebrew text of the amendment is legally binding in any action:

Israel: Prevention of Entry of Foreign Nationals Promoting Boycott of Israel
Library of Congress archive

The World Council of Churches clashes with Israel over a ban on boycotters

The council will continue to support boycotting produce from the occupied territories despite a new law barring those who do so from the country

The Economist

Israeli Travel Ban Draws Fire

The new law would stop some pro-Israel groups from visiting the Jewish state if they have publicly called for boycotts of Israel's settlements.

Foreign Policy

New Israel Law Bars Foreign Critics From Entering the Country

The New York Times

ISRAEL AS A "JEWISH STATE"

2018 "JEWISH NATION STATE" LAW

While this law directly affects and attacks Palestinians in Israel, East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza and the Diaspora in their legal, human rights, cultural and citizenship identities, all BDS activists should be aware of the implications of this law. It is used to chill the aims of international advocacy for Palestinian human rights and to vacate Israel's responsibilities under United Nations international law with regard to Palestine and Palestinians. It has also been cited globally as a reason why BDS "threatens" Palestinians further.

Read the full language of the law here on website of Jerusalem Post.

The originals are in Hebrew on the Israeli government website, but here is an English translation posted by the Israeli government. [link]

VOCABULARY

TERMINOLOGY, WORDS, LABELS, ETC.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Under international law, states that have signed the UN Fourth Geneva Convention are under an obligation to enforce the provisions of that convention when it is established that a member nation has violated the regulations of the Convention. Amnesty International has provided a clear summary of those obligations with regard to Palestine. Here is a quote it:

- The state obligation to ensure respect entails abstaining from acts that would be contrary to this objective, such as directly financing, favouring or facilitating economic activities that are directly connected to serious breaches of humanitarian law.
- As explained earlier, Israel's settlement project entails serious breaches of peremptory norms which give rise to certain additional duties among all states. These duties are: the duty to "cooperate to bring to an end through lawful means" serious breaches; the duty to not "recognize as lawful" the situation created by such breaches; and the duty to not "render aid or assistance in maintaining that situation".
- While the exact scope of the obligation to "bring to an end" serious breaches is debated, this duty implies, at a minimum, refraining from promoting, supporting or allowing economic activities that contribute to the exact opposite, such as those activities which result in maintaining and growing the settlements. The obligation of... read more here.

APARTHEID

Apartheid is the Afrikaans word for 'apartness', originally used to describe the system of racial discrimination that existed in South Africa until 1994.

- The term apartheid is not only a reference to South Africa's former regime; it is used in international law to describe a category of regime, defined in the United Nations (UN) International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973), to which more than 100 states are a party. The definition was refined in Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2002).
- The Convention defines the Crime of Apartheid as: "inhumane acts...committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime."

There is overwhelming evidence that the system instituted by the Israeli government against the Palestinian people meets the UN definition of Apartheid. In effect, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory constitute one territorial unit under full Israeli control. Under Israeli law, and in practice, Jewish Israelis and Palestinians

are treated differently in almost every aspect of life including freedom of movement, family, housing, education, employment and other basic human rights.

Dozens of Israeli laws and policies institutionalize this prevailing system of racial discrimination and domination. Jewish Israeli settlers are governed by Israeli civil law, while Palestinians also living in the occupied West Bank are governed by Israeli military law.

[above is from War on Want's Israeli apartheid factsheet]

New Yesh Din *Report on Apartheid*:

On Thursday, July 9, 2020, Yesh Din released a ground-breaking exhaustive legal opinion concluding that Israel is committing the crime of apartheid, defined in international law as a crime against humanity. The opinion finds that, even without annexation, the military regime in the West Bank is intended to maintain the supremacy and domination of one population over another, constituting apartheid.

- Read the full legal opinion here.
- Read an executive summary of the legal opinion here.
- FAQs - Frequently Asked Questions here.

COMPLICITY

Complicity is defined as "the state of being involved with others in an illegal activity or wrongdoing." In varying degrees, many groups have been complicit in advancing Israel's colonial framework, from the Palestinian Authority to the United Nations. Complicity is present in the following arenas: corporate, academic, tourism, military, diplomatic, and more.

Examples:

- *Diplomatic complicity*: "Selling out Palestinians: From the UN to the PA" from researcher Ramona Wadi appears in Middle East Monitor.
- *Corporate complicity*: UN Report of complicity of 206 corporations in violation of International Law.
- *Academic complicity*: Report: British universities invest £450m in companies complicit in Israeli crimes:
- *Tourism complicity*: By listing properties and attractions in Israeli settlements, digital tourism companies are profiting from war crimes. See Video section, #12.

EXCEPTIONALISM

Exceptionalism is "the idea that a person, country or political system can be allowed to be different from, and perhaps better than, others" ~The Cambridge Dictionary

- In the context of BDS advocacy and activism, exceptionalism as it relates to Israel means that the unique understanding of the State of Israel as Jewish state founded as a homeland following the Holocaust grants it a special status in its self-understanding as the only democracy in the Middle East. Thus, the issues of security, antisemitism, development of settlements and resources, generational trauma and victories in military conflicts since 1948 are used by the government and agencies of the State of Israel to grant it the "exceptional" justification for not having to fully comply with the United Nations laws, treaties and conventions on which it signed. (See Impunity.)

The effects of the position of Israeli exceptionalism lead to normalizing violations of international law, denial of human rights for Palestinians under Israeli control and continual land grabs in the building of settlements, blockades of Gaza, invasions of Palestinian lands and multiple forms of surveillance and imprisonment of Palestinian citizens under military law.

ETHNIC CLEANSING

'The term ethnic cleansing refers to the removal of people who belong to a specific ethnic or religious group from a country, whether by forcefully displacing them, or by killing them. The goal of such actions is to establish an ethnically uniform country, or other geographic region. In addition to removing people, ethnic cleansing often involves removing any physical, cultural evidence of their existence in the region. To explore this concept, consider the following ethnic cleansing definition.

- Definition of Ethnic Cleansing - The removal of an unwanted ethnic group from a society, whether by forced emigration, or by genocide. The expulsion, imprisonment, or killing of an ethnic minority by a dominant majority, in order to achieve ethnic sameness.
- What is Ethnic Cleansing - Throughout history, leaders of certain nations have attempted to create an ethnically or religiously uniform people within the state. This is accomplished by engaging in cleansing campaigns, in which all of the people in a geographic region that do not meet a specific standard are forced out or killed. The term "ethnic cleansing" is a blanket term that does not refer to one specific crime. Rather, it refers to the act of forcing people from their homelands, through the use of fear, intimidation, violence, and murder.

In 1993, the United Nations (U.N.) Commission of Experts defined ethnic cleansing as "rendering an area ethnically homogenous by using force or intimidation to remove persons of given groups from the area." The Commission reported, to the U.N. Security Council, that the former Yugoslavia had undergone ethnic cleansing through the use of arbitrary arrests, torture, rape, murder, executions outside the judicial system, confinement of civilians, military attacks on civilians, and malicious destruction of public and private property.

When the Commission issued its final report in 1994, the crimes of mistreatment of prisoners of war and civilian prisoners, use of civilians as human shields, mass murder, destruction of cultural property, theft of personal property, and violent attacks on hospitals, locations with Red Cross emblems, and medical personnel were added. ~quoted from Legal Dictionary.

IMPUNITY

Impunity means "exemption from punishment or loss or escape from fines". In the international law of human rights, it refers to the failure to bring perpetrators of human rights violations to justice and, as such, itself constitutes a denial of victims' right to justice and redress.

- In spite of resolutions and treaties, the international community has not held the State of Israel accountable nor imposed penalties nor required reparations for the Palestinian victims in the violation of human rights under international law. Impunity, thus, has been the de facto enacted policy toward Israel in its actions and policies of the occupation.
- BDS has been one of the tools used in the international community to bring attention to the impunity that the state of Israel has been allowed.

The amended Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights Through Action to Combat Impunity, submitted to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on 8 February 2005, defines impunity as:

'the impossibility, de jure or de facto, of bringing the perpetrators of violations to account – whether in criminal, civil, administrative or disciplinary proceedings – since they are not subject to any inquiry that might lead to their being accused, arrested, tried and, if found guilty, sentenced to appropriate penalties, and to making reparations to their victims.'

The UN Set of Principles to Combat Impunity (2005) is available in PDF here. [link]

INVESTMENT SCREEN

A securities and investment analysis technique in which the investor filters a large set of possible investments by separating according to a range of values for a predetermined set of variables. (read more: Investorwords.com)

Used in the context of BDS, an organization may decide on a set of variables (screens) connected to companies who profit from the manufacture of certain products or use of materials that are deemed to contribute to the oppression of Palestinians. Those screens then shape decisions about boycotting those products and material sources, investor engagement to change the human rights violations caused by a company's policies, or to determine what investments or securities will be divested from or issued a do-not-purchase order by the organization for that company. This also is extended to screening against particular banks or other financial institutions for their role in financial exchanges or corporate financing of such companies.

See WhoProfits.org, an independent research center dedicated to exposing the commercial involvement of Israeli and international corporations in the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Syrian lands.

THE ISRAEL LOBBY

"John J. Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago's Department of Political Science and Stephen M. Walt of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government contend that the centerpiece of U.S. Middle East policy is its intimate relationship with Israel. They argue that although often justified as reflecting shared strategic interests or compelling moral imperatives, the U.S. commitment to Israel is due primarily to the activities of the 'Israel Lobby.' In a describe the various activities that pro-Israel groups have undertaken in order to shift U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction." Harvard Kennedy School

[The full paper is available for free download at the above link]

Walt and Mearsheimer's 2008 book, *The Israel Lobby*, is based on a paper of the same name that was published by *The London Review of Books* in 2006 after *The Atlantic*, a US periodical that commissioned it, refused to publish it when it was ready.

SETTLER COLONIALISM

Though often conflated with colonialism more generally, settler colonialism is a distinct ... formation. ...[It] seeks to replace the original population of the colonized territory with a new society of settlers. This new society needs land, and so settler colonialism depends primarily on access to territory. This is achieved by various means, either through treaties with indigenous inhabitants or simply by "taking possession." Britain, for example, implemented the doctrine of "terra nullius" ("land belonging to no one") to claim sovereignty over Australia. The entire continent was thereby declared legally uninhabited, despite millennia of Aboriginal occupation.

~Tate A. LeFevre, *Anthropologist Settler Colonialism*, 2015 paper

ZIONISM IS SETTLER COLONIALISM

"Zionism is not a national movement, it's a settler colonialist movement. ...if we will not use the right dictionary and the right language to describe what goes on on the ground, then we will continue to provide an umbrella of immunity to the settler colonial state of Israel to try and complete what it started in 1948—namely, to have as

much of Palestine as possible with as few Palestinians in it as possible."~Ilan Pappé, Israeli Historian, The Value of Viewing Israel-Palestine Through the Lens of Settler-Colonialism,
~Ilan Pappé, Lecture at the National Press Club, Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, March 24, 2017

VIDEOS

[all videos are links]

1. WHY BDS?

BDS is a nonviolent strategy that allows people around the world to contribute to the Palestinian struggle against Israeli apartheid and for freedom, justice and equality. This video from the BDS Movement is a good introduction to the call from Palestinian civil society for economic action.

2. WHAT IS BDS?

US Congress is considering a bill that will criminalize the boycotting of Israel with up to 20 years imprisonment! This attack on First Amendment rights is based on a misunderstanding of BDS. But what is BDS, and why is the US Congress targeting it?

3. SOUTH AFRICA DOES BDS

South Africans know apartheid when they see it and they stand in solidarity with Palestine. This short compilation of 2015 highlights from grassroots BDS work in South Africa is a good overview of the extent of solidarity from South Africa to Palestine.

For more South Africa related videos, see Africa4Palestine on YouTube.

4. ONE EXAMPLE OF GRASSROOTS SUCCESS

In 2016, the City Council of Ivry-sur-Seine, a city near Paris, adopted a resolution for a boycott of Israeli products. The recommendation was proposed on behalf of the municipal majority and adopted by a large majority. They cited the need for "sanctions against an Israeli State which persists in its apartheid policy." Further, the city council said, "We express our willingness to examine all options available to us so that the products from Israeli settlements are not acquired and distributed by the city services. And we ask France to stop these imports."

5. THE MONEY BEHIND ANTI-BDS GROUPS WITHIN US CHURCHES

Israel Action Network's opaque lobbying and funding is a prime example of what grassroots groups around the world are up against when it comes to protesting Israeli human rights violations. Working against big organizations with links to the Israeli government, grassroots activists are up against endless funding but have truth on their side.

These clips from a behind-closed-doors event reveal who has been training and funding Christians to work against BDS within their own churches. Note that the host calls BDS, a time-honored non-violent protest tactic, "economic warfare on Israel." More info.

6. THE MOVEMENT TO BOYCOTT ISRAEL EXPLAINED

As a way to show solidarity for Palestinians, many have joined the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement. So how does BDS work?

7. ISRAEL, GAZA, AND THE BDS MOVEMENT

Israel's month-long assault on Gaza has over 1900 Palestinians dead, mostly civilians. It has sparked condemnation by the UN and of course on twitter. Outraged tweeps are using the hashtag #BDS, short for means boycott, divestment and sanctions -- a growing movement to get Israel to change its policies when it comes to human rights.

8. ADDRESSING CHALLENGES TO BDS

Roger Waters, founding member of the iconic rock band Pink Floyd confronts the challenges to BDS on the progressive US new program, Democracy Now, who says, "In recent years, Waters has become one of the most prominent musicians supporting BDS, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement targeting Israel over its treatment of Palestinians."

9. ANNEXATION BREAKDOWN

Three things you should know about annexation...

10. A US EXAMPLE

Elected officials are targeting your free speech rights because they want to shield a foreign government from criticism. As the Trump administration ramps up its crackdown on Palestinian rights advocacy, states across the U.S. are requiring people to sign oaths pledging they won't boycott Israel. But human rights advocates aren't backing down--they want freedom, justice and equality in Palestine, and everywhere around the world.
~ IMEU.org

11. IT'S NOT COMPLICATED

Veteran Israeli journalist Gideon Levy discusses why the Palestinian situation is a straightforward struggle for land and rights.
~IMEU.org

12. COMPLICITY - DREAM HOLIDAY IN ISRAEL?

Complicity in Israeli human rights abuses comes in many ways. Here is one example of complicity through irresponsible tourism.

RESOURCES

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT...

LISTED ALPHABETICALLY

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

AFSC actively promotes (BDS) boycotts, divestments and sanctions campaigns against Israel; accuses Israel of “apartheid against Palestinians”; and advocates for a Palestinian “right of return,” meaning the end of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people. AFSC has also accused Israel of “obvious violence in Gaza...slow and systematic ethnic cleansing in the West Bank and East Jerusalem through continuing displacement from sprawling illegal settlements, land grabs, the separation barrier...crushing restrictions of Palestinian movement, and a network of racist laws.”

AFSC supports efforts to encourage Israeli youth to dodge the draft and promotes “anti-normalization,” rejecting dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. In 2015, “Palestine-Israel Program Director” explained AFSC’s “position supportive of anti-normalization principles,” rejecting “any project, initiative, or activity, in Palestine or internationally, that aims (implicitly or explicitly) to bring together Palestinians and Israelis (people or institutions) without placing as its goal opposition and resistance to the Israeli occupation and structural inequalities.”

AFSC operates a project with Coalition of Women for Peace (CWP) called “Hamushim” (“Armed”) that “works to expose the true human price of the Israeli military industry and arms trade, as well as to mobilize actions against it.” The organization’s activists accuse Israel of selling weapons to dictatorships and countries that suppress human rights in exchange for their sympathetic votes in UN forums.

Farming Injustice:

International Trade with Israeli Agricultural Companies and the Destruction of Palestinian Farming
Report by Palestinian farming organizations and civil society on how Israeli agricultural export companies such as Mehadrin and EDOM play a key role in Israel’s destruction of Palestinian agriculture, the dispossession of Palestinian farmers and land grabs that make way for illegal Israeli settlements.

French Banks' Dangerous Liaisons With The Israeli Settlement Enterprise

The Israeli banking system constitutes an essential tool of the settlement policy and Israeli companies contribute to maintaining and developing the settlements. French financial institutions, by persistently providing Israeli banks and companies directly involved in settlement expansion with financial support, are therefore contributing to maintaining and developing this situation. Five major French financial groups – namely BNP Paribas, Crédit Agricole, Société Générale, BPCE and AXA – manage financial holdings or hold shares in Israeli banks and companies which contribute to the Israeli settlements and supply the services that are essential for maintaining and developing the settlements, such as house and factory construction, telecommunications and internet connections or the installation of surveillance equipment. In addition to these holdings, the four leading French banks — namely BNP Paribas, Société Générale, LCL (subsidiary of the Crédit Agricole group) and Natixis (subsidiary of the Banques Populaires — Caisse d'épargne group) have granted loans totalling millions of euros for the period 2004-2020 to the Israeli public company, Israel Electric Corporation (IEC at a time when IEC supplies electricity to all illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank

Independent Jewish Voices

This is a network of Jews in Britain who share a commitment to certain principles, especially with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in mind: putting human rights first, rejecting all forms of racism, and giving equal priority to Palestinians and Israelis in their quest for a peaceful and secure future. We believe that these principles, rather than group loyalty, should determine the parameters of legitimate debate. Coming from a wide range of backgrounds, and with a wide range of views, we all share the belief that the interests of an occupying power should not count for more than the human rights of an occupied people. IJV is a network of individuals who wish to have a platform for critical debate on major political questions, and the situation in the Middle East in particular. The initiative was born out of a frustration with the widespread misconception that the Jews of this country speak with one voice – and that this voice supports the Israeli government's policies.

IJV is today one of a growing number of networks across the world reflecting the views of Jews with a strong commitment to peace and human rights who feel that an independent stand is vital in the pursuit of peace in the Middle East. Apart from the UK, other countries that have given birth to such groups in recent years are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, USA. In addition, there is an impressive number of both Israeli and Palestinian NGOs active in the areas of peace, human rights and co-existence.

Jewish Voice for Peace

Jewish Voice for Peace opposes anti-Jewish, anti-Muslim, and anti-Arab bigotry and oppression. JVP seeks an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem; security and self-determination for Israelis and Palestinians; a just solution for Palestinian refugees based on principles established in international law; an end to violence against civilians; and peace and justice for all peoples of the Middle East. JVP members are inspired by Jewish tradition to work together for peace, social justice, equality, human rights, respect for international law, and a U.S. foreign policy based on these ideals. JVP is a diverse and democratic community of activists inspired by Jewish tradition to work together for peace, social justice, and human rights. JVP supports the aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians for security and self-determination. JVP supports peace activists in Palestine and Israel, and works in broad coalition with other Jewish, Arab-American, faith-based, peace and social justice organizations.

JVP seeks:

- A U.S. foreign policy based on promoting peace, democracy, human rights, and respect for international law.
- An end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem.
- A resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem consistent with international law and equity.
- An end to all violence against civilians.
- Peace among the peoples of the Middle East.

We are among the many American Jews who say to the U.S. and Israeli governments: “Not in our names!”

Occupation, Inc.

How Settlement Businesses Contribute to Israel's Violations of Palestinian Rights

Almost immediately after Israel's military occupation of the West Bank in June 1967, the Israeli government began establishing settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. From the outset, private businesses have been involved in Israel's settlement policies, benefiting from and contributing to them. This report details the ways in which Israeli and international businesses have helped to build, finance, service, and market settlement communities. In many cases, businesses are “settlers” themselves, drawn to settlements in part by low rents, favorable tax rates, government subsidies, and access to cheap Palestinian labor.

Stop Israeli Killer Drones

...From Intensifying the EU's Border Militarization

Israel's military industry has been lobbying for years to get a share of the EU multi-million spending on border militarization. Israel's Ministry of Defense announced in 2018 that Europe is a “significant target for defense transactions, mainly in terms of ‘border defenses’”. The results are coming in: Frontex and EMSA have started using Israeli killer drones.

Who Profits

'Who Profits' is an independent research center dedicated to exposing the commercial involvement of Israeli and international corporations in the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Syrian lands. It was founded in 2007 as a project of the Coalition of Women for Peace, and became an independent Research Center in 2013. Who Profits addresses the economy of the Israeli occupation through three areas of activity: we maintain an online database of complicit corporations; we operate a free online information center; and we publish regular reports and updates on the corporate aspect of the occupation. Through these, we shed light on the role of the private sector in the Israeli settlement enterprise, in economic exploitation of Palestinian and Syrian land, labor and resources, and in the apparatus of control over the occupied population.

The verified and reliable information presented by Who Profits helps grassroots activists, civil society organizations and policymakers to stimulate a candid public conversation regarding the occupation economy and the global and local economic interests that play a critical role in sustaining Israeli control over occupied Palestinian and Syrian land.

11.11.11 and Profundo

“Doing Business with the occupation”

In anticipation of the UN database on business enterprises involved in the Israeli settlement enterprise, this report identifies direct and indirect links between European businesses and selected economic sectors in Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory. These settlements are illegal under international law.

Report: 11.11.11.: Doing Business with the Occupation

11.11.11.: New report exposes financial relationships between Europe and illegal Israeli settlements

CNCD: Colonisation Israélienne: Des Entreprises Belges Impliquées.

Sustainability research and advice
