

Motion for the Edinburgh University Students Association (EUSA) to Join the International Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Campaign Against Israel

This Association Notes:

1. The unified call from Palestinian civil society in 2005 for the international community to undertake a strategy of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel until it complies with international law and the universal principles of Human Rights.
2. That this call results from the continued occupation of Arab lands and the ongoing violation of international law, as outlined below.
3. That criticism of the policies and actions of the state of Israel is not inherently anti-Semitic.
4. The suffering of the Palestinian people resulting from the Nakba ('catastrophe') of 1948, also known as the creation of the State of Israel, and acknowledges the Right of Return for displaced people as recognised under international law and reinforced by the UN Resolution 194.
5. That Israel continues to build an 8-metre high "annexation" wall most of which stands inside the West Bank, forcing the separation of Palestinian communities from one another and the annexation of additional Palestinian land. On the 9th July 2004, the International Court of Justice ruled that "The construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law."
6. That within the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, Israel continues a policy of settlement expansion in direct violation of Article 49, Paragraph 6 of the 4th Geneva Convention, which declares, "an occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into territories it occupies." This continues despite a current increase in pressure from the international community to cease such activity, as it poses a direct obstacle to peace negotiations.
7. That Israel's continued policy of Palestinian house demolitions and evictions constitutes a blatant violation of international law, notably the 4th Geneva Convention which obligates Israel, as the occupying authority, to maintain the geographic and demographic characteristic of all the occupied territories. Since 1967, Israel has demolished over 18,000 Palestinian family homes to sustain a policy of "quiet transfer" of the indigenous Palestinian population and the annexation of their land.
8. That a recent report by Amnesty International found the Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank use four times as much water as the Palestinian population, which means that while many Palestinian villages struggled to meet basic domestic water needs and thousands lack running water, Israeli settlers fill swimming pools, water lawns and irrigate large farms. Israel confiscates 80% of the water from the only aquifer in the West Bank for use by Israeli citizens and settlers despite having access to alternative sources within its own borders.

9. That some 500 checkpoints and roadblocks – designed to corral the Palestinian population – pockmark the occupied West Bank, causing massive damage to Palestinian commerce restricting access to medical care and education. This ghettoisation or “Bantustanisation” of the Palestinian people violates Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that “everyone has the right to freedom of movement.”
10. That over the 3 weeks following December 27th 2008 the Israeli army and air force killed over 1,300 Palestinians, including over 400 children, and injured more than 4,000 in waves of catastrophic attacks against the besieged population of Gaza that, according to the UN Development Program, also “completely destroyed” 56% of business establishments in heavily hit neighbourhoods. In the same period 14 Israelis were killed, 3 of whom were civilians killed by rocket attacks.
11. That the Goldstone Report, commissioned by the United Nations, concluded that Israel violated the 4th Geneva Convention during its attack on Gaza by targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, that Israel is guilty of committing war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity.
12. That the 3-year siege and blockade of Gaza has crippled Gaza’s economy and caused starvation and malnourishment throughout Gaza. Successive governments of Israel, supported by the United States and the EU, have severely restricted the flow of food, fuel, and medical supplies into Gaza. The blockade has resulted in a situation where the unemployment rate remains at around 45%, 80% of the population live below the poverty line and hospitals and educational institutions are forced to operate well below minimum requirements.
13. That Israeli policies restrict academic potential and freedom in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), most notably at al-Quds University, which is severed from occupied Palestinian East Jerusalem and its residents by the illegal “separation” wall.
14. That the State of Israel openly discriminates on the basis of religion, race, and nationality with regard to citizenship, housing land ownership, and marriage by applying different laws to citizens and non-citizens whether they are legally classified as “Jewish” or “non-Jewish.”
15. That Archbishop Desmond Tutu wrote in The Guardian: “I’ve been very deeply distressed in my visit to the Holy Land; it reminded me so much of what happened to us black people in South Africa.” This was supported by the UN’s special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories, South African law professor John Dugard, in a 2007 UN report, which concluded that the Israeli regime is “worse than the one that existed in South Africa.” He went on to state: “It is difficult to resist the conclusion that many of Israel’s laws and practices violate the 1966 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.
16. That a vital part of the global campaign against apartheid in South Africa was the tactic of boycott, whereby the anti-apartheid movements called for the severing of all links to South Africa; including economic, political, cultural, and academic ties.
17. That Ronnie Kasrils, the Jewish South African Minister of Intelligence said, “The boycotts and sanctions ultimately helped liberate both black

- and whites in South Africa. Palestinians and Israelis will similarly benefit from this non-violent campaign that Palestinians are calling for.”
18. That an increasing number of Israelis support BDS tactics, notably Neve Gordon, head of the Department of Politics and Government at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel, who referred to Israel as an apartheid state in an article endorsing BDS.
 19. That the growing BDS movement has recently been endorsed by the British Trade Union Movement, which represents 6.5 million workers from across the UK.
 20. That the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) recognises “the complicity of Israeli educational institutions in colonisation and military preparation.” It acknowledges that “international pressure is necessary to force Israel to abide by international law” and it is determined to “renew urgently its call to members to reflect on the moral and political appropriateness of collaboration with Israeli educational institutions.”
 21. That the student unions of the Universities of Sussex, Manchester and LSE have already passed motions in support of the BDS campaign.
 22. That the University of Edinburgh Students Association has an existing policy to boycott Nestle and Eden Springs on ethical and moral grounds.
 23. That the University of Edinburgh has signed the Agreed Approach Policy, under which the University Court has explicitly stated that the investments in companies that act “unethically” are subject to review by the Court. Therefore, under its own rules the University is duty bound to investigate any corporate or financial ties to Israel, taking into account the aforementioned points.
 24. That the students at that University of Edinburgh have a history of solidarity with Palestinians, notably in their voting to pass the “Boycott Eden Springs” and “Palestine: Right to an Education” motions at previous EUSA AGMs. The latter motion twinned EUSA with Birzeit University in the occupied West Bank, and committed it to an ongoing campaign for the rights of Palestinian students.

This Association Believes:

25. In the basic principle of non-discrimination based on race, nationality, ethnicity, colour or national origin as upheld by international, European and United Kingdom law in various forms.
26. That any government favouring one group of people over another, as Israel does, based on race, nationality, ethnicity, colour or national origin is both unethical and un-democratic.
27. That attacks on innocent, unarmed civilians, whether carried out by Palestinians or Israelis, are to be condemned.
28. That the worthy goal of a lasting peace in Israel and Palestine is best served by the recognition of universal human rights and an end to the policies of separation practiced by Israel.
29. That Israel is wrong to have institutionalised two distinct legal regimes in the 1967 Occupied Territories, and to have created separate infrastructures for the Jewish settler and indigenous Palestinian populations. The Occupation is illegal and it should end immediately.

30. That Israel should cease at once the systematic discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel within its 1948 borders and become a state for all its citizens.
31. That Palestinian refugees in the OPT and the diaspora should have the Right of Return to their homeland and receive just compensation for sixty-one years of displacement.
32. That Palestinian Muslims and Christians should have free access to their holy sites, including the Al-Aqsa mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
33. That student debate over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be encouraged, and no part of this motion should be seen as discriminating against students on the basis of their religion, nationality, or views held on Middle East relations.

This Association Resolves:

34. To join the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement by divesting from and boycotting all Israeli companies (including but not limited to those whose products are currently stocked in EUSA outlets) that support or benefit in any way from the illegal Israeli occupation.
35. To lobby the University of Edinburgh to adopt a similar BDS policy towards the State of Israel, and to build links with student unions and trade unions who adopt a BDS policy.
36. To advocate a comprehensive boycott of Israeli institutions at the national and international levels, including suspension of all forms of funding and subsidies to these institutions.
37. To refrain from participation in any form of academic and cultural cooperation, collaboration or joint projects with Israeli institutions (all of which are understood to support, enable or fail to oppose the Israeli government policy of Palestinian occupation and oppression).
38. To raise awareness about the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign through Association outlets.

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