



Boycott Divestment Sanctions

**The Palestinian Boycott,
Divestment and Sanctions
National Committee (BNC) is a
wide coalition of the largest
Palestinian mass organizations,
trade unions, networks and
organizations.**

BNC Members:

Council of National and Islamic Forces in
Palestine

General Union of Palestinian Workers

Palestinian General Federation of Trade
Unions (PGFTU)

Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO, 132
member organizations)

Federation of Independent Trade Unions

Union of Arab Community Based
Associations (Ittijah, 74 member
organizations)

Global Palestine Right of Return Coalition
(12 member organizations)

Occupied Palestine and Golan Heights
Initiative (16 member organizations)

General Union of Palestinian Women

Palestinian Farmers Union

Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall
Campaign (STW, 13 member organizations,
50 popular committees)

Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and
Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)

National Committee to Commemorate the
Nakba (20 member organizations)

Civic Coalition for the Defense of
Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem (CCDPR),
18 member organizations)

Coalition for Jerusalem (41 member
organizations)

Union of Palestinian Charitable
Organizations

Palestinian Economic Monitor

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The BNC Salutes South African Dock Workers Action!

Press Release

Palestine, 3 February 2009 -- The Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee, BNC, warmly salutes the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), a member of COSATU, for its decision today not to offload an Israeli ship that is due to arrive in Durban, South Africa, on 8 February. Coming weeks after the massive Israeli massacre in Gaza, this distinguished expression by SATAWU of effective solidarity with the Palestinian people in general, and with Gaza in particular, sets a historic precedent that reminds us of the first such action during the apartheid era taken by Danish dock workers in 1963, when they decided not to offload ships carrying South African products, triggering a similar boycott in Sweden, England and elsewhere.

Last week, endorsing the Palestinian Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), the Maritime Union of Australia (Western Australia) resolved to boycott all Israeli vessels and all vessels bearing goods arriving from or going to Israel. A few weeks before, Greek dock workers threatened to block a ship carrying weapons to Israel during its criminal war on Gaza. Those actions, together with the SATAWU decision today, will most likely usher in a new, qualitatively advanced phase of BDS that goes well beyond symbolism. We call on dock workers' unions around the world to endorse similar sanctions against Israeli or Israel-bound cargo.

Support in South Africa for the Palestinian struggle against Israel's colonial and apartheid policies and its war crimes is reaching new heights, with COSATU, the South African Council of Churches, the Palestine Solidarity Committee, the Young Communist League and many grassroots organizations and networks leading diverse forms of BDS campaigns, informed by the long and ultimately successful struggle of South Africans against apartheid. The Palestinian and global BDS movement against Israel is indebted to the people of South Africa for their inspiring and morale-boosting solidarity.

If Gaza today has become the test of our universal morality and our common humanity, the fast spreading BDS movement around the world has passed the test with flying colors. In fact, worldwide support for BDS against Israel in reaction to its war crimes and crimes against humanity in the occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including Jerusalem, has shown that international civil society fully recognizes that Israel must be held accountable before international law and must pay a heavy price for its atrocities and ongoing willful destruction of Palestinian society. In this context, the decision by each of Venezuela, Bolivia, Qatar and Mauritania to sever diplomatic ties with Israel was a particularly commendable way of challenging Israel's impunity. The shift from traditional, mostly symbolic, solidarity to BDS in Norway, Sweden, Britain, Ireland, Turkey, Canada, Belgium, Malaysia, Spain, USA, Brazil, New Zealand, among others, is a resounding endorsement of effective, morally and politically sound action to end Israel's multi-faceted oppression of the indigenous people of Palestine and to bring about a just peace to Palestine and the entire region.

The Palestinian civil society Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel, launched in 2005 by over 170 Palestinian political parties, unions and organizations, offers the vehicle for all people of conscience, organizations and institutions around the globe to join the collective effort to reaffirm the primacy of international law, human rights and dignity. To replicate the strength and effectiveness of the anti-apartheid movement of the 1980s, the BNC urges civil society institutions and every concerned citizen around the world to:

- Integrate BDS in every struggle for justice and human rights, by adopting wide, context-sensitive and sustainable boycotts of Israeli products, companies, academic and cultural institutions, and sports groups, similar to the actions taken against apartheid South Africa;
- Ensure national and multinational corporations are held responsible and accordingly sanctioned for profiteering from Israel's occupation and other violations of human rights and international law;
- Work towards cancelling and blocking free trade and other preferential agreements with Israel, including the EU-Israel and the Mercosur-Israel trade agreements; and
- Pressure governments to impose a direct and indirect arms embargo against Israel that guarantees end-user compliance with international law and human rights principles.

Our "South Africa" moment has arrived. The time for BDS is now!

Secretariat of the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC)