

BRICUP Newsletter 120

BRICUP

British Committee for the
Universities of Palestine

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Stephen Hawking – and the academic boycott of Israel

Averil Parkinson- Chair of the Cambridge branch of the Palestine Solidarity campaign

Jonathan Rosenhead, - Chair of BRICUP.



Stephen Hawking who died on March 14th is one of the great scientists of our generation, and one of the greatest exemplars of what the human spirit can achieve in any generation. We wish to honour him as a person of not only intellectual distinction, but also as one of firm and committed principle.

A cause which he consistently supported was that of the Palestinians. One example is his backing for the Palestinian Advanced Physics School, held in 2016 at the Arab-American University in Jenin, and again in 2017 at Birzeit University. Hawking asked his 3.8 million Facebook followers to contribute financially to the 2017 event, enabling it to be a more ambitious affair. 'I support the rights of scientists everywhere to freedom of movement, publication and collaboration' [he said](#). A new international organisation of mostly younger research scientists, Scientists for Palestine, has developed out of this initiative – it had [its inaugural conference](#) in Cambridge earlier this year.

His support could also be explicitly political. In January 2009, speaking to Al Jazeera about Israel's Cast Lead invasion of Gaza in which more than 1,000 Palestinians were killed, Hawking [said](#): "A people under occupation will continue to resist in any way it can. If Israel wants peace it will have to talk to Hamas like Britain did with the IRA."

Stephen Hawking and the Presidential Conference

His most famous act of support for the Palestinian cause came in 2013. Hawking had accepted an invitation to attend Shimon Peres' 'Presidential Conference' scheduled for June 18-20th that year in Jerusalem. The conference would not be strictly academic – more of a jamboree in fact, aimed to demonstrate how many famous people would come to Israel on the occasion of President Shimon Peres' 90th birthday. Bill Clinton, Sharon Stone, Barbara Streisand, President Kagame of Rwanda, Prince Albert II of Monaco, Tony Blair of course.... And possibly there were some intellectuals too but the news reports don't mention them.

Naturally when the plans for the Presidential Conference were announced in early April Stephen Hawking's name was up there in lights. Israeli activists got in touch quickly with comrades in the UK and, initially without any communication between them, two strands of activity got off the ground.

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign group and friends in Cambridge already knew that Professor Hawking had a good understanding of Palestinian life under occupation and apartheid, had visited there, and that he was the patron of a Palestinian Studentship fund. They wrote to him on April 22nd, asking him to respect the Palestinian call to boycott, and spoke with his office to explain in more detail. (Getting to see and communicate directly with the man himself, given his condition, was never going to be possible.)

In parallel BRICUP started collecting signatures from notable scientists asking him to reconsider his decision. A galaxy of distinguished UK signatories agreed to put their names to the request: twenty professors from 15 universities and 11 disciplines. And then at the last minute Noam Chomsky agreed to add his signature, a striking departure from his usual stance on boycott. On April 27th we emailed this message to Professor Hawking.

Even before this message had been sent off, Professor Hawking's office contacted Cambridge PSC. He had already started seeking advice about his participation in the Conference from his existing Palestinian academic contacts, and asked if the group could supply him with the names of some additional senior Palestinian academics that he could consult. (It was stressed that the only views he was interested in were those of Palestinian academics.) At this point Cambridge

PSC got in touch with BRICUP for help in making these contacts, and the two strands of activity merged.

The message from Professor Hawking was clear. He would not be influenced by the opinions of external advocates of boycott. He wanted to know what those on the front-line wanted him to do. If he was to cancel his commitment to go their views would, in effect, have to be unanimous.

The responses he received made up Hawking's mind. On Friday March 3rd he wrote a short letter to the conference organisers declining the invitation (see below). In it he said that he had initially decided to accept the invitation because it would "allow me to express my opinion on the prospects for a Peace Settlement". However his Palestinian academic interlocutors, he said, had been "unanimous that I should respect the boycott". He also said that "had I attended I would have stated my opinion that the policy of the present Israeli government is likely to lead to disaster".

Dear Ms Michal Stopper-Vax

I accepted the invitation to the Presidential conference with the intention that this would not only allow me to express my opinion on the prospects for a Peace Settlement but also because it would allow me to lecture in the West Bank. However I have received a number of emails from Palestinian academics. They are unanimous that I should respect the boycott. In view of this, I must withdraw from the conference. Had I attended I would have stated my opinion that the policy of the present Israeli government is likely to lead to disaster.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Hawking

The Silence

What happened next, or rather what didn't happen, sheds light on how the British establishment works.

Those who had worked hard to get this result knew that this decision was a game-changer for academic boycott. We waited, elated, for the headline coverage. And it didn't come; as far as Hawking and the Presidential Conference was

concerned there was an eerie silence. Hawking's message to the conference organisers had been copied to a range of those who had been involved with the process, so we had the text. But there was no announcement in Israel, no press release or coverage in the UK.

On Saturday 4th we asked the University whether there would be a press release, or whether we ourselves should put out a statement. The reply from the Acting Director of Communications by mobile phone was that there should be no statement of any kind without full approval from Professor Hawking. It took till the very end of the working day on 7th May to get agreement between the group, the Professor's office, and Cambridge University's Director of Communications. This said

We understand that Professor Stephen Hawking has declined his invitation to attend the Israeli Presidential Conference Facing Tomorrow 2013, due to take place in Jerusalem on 18-20 June. This is his independent decision to respect the boycott, based upon his knowledge of Palestine, and on the unanimous advice of his own academic contacts there.

This statement was immediately placed on the BRICUP and PSC websites, and generated an [article](#) in the Guardian overnight.

The noise

Then the media frenzy began. By the next day the story was being covered world-wide. This was great news for campaigners for Palestinian rights and freedom, promoting the non-violent tactic of boycott divestment and sanctions (BDS) to help achieve them. And then the euphoria was cut short.

Around midday on 8th May, the Director of Communications at Cambridge University sent us this message: 'Would you please remove the statement from the website with immediate effect' and for good measure added the following:

Statement on Professor Hawking and Jerusalem conference

A University spokesman said:

"Professor Hawking will not be attending the conference in Israel in June for health reasons - his doctors have advised against him flying."

This last statement was issued to the press. It flatly denied the validity of the statement that we had posted up, despite it having been patiently negotiated with them over several days. Several of us knew that Cambridge's Director of

Communications had been copied in to and seen Hawking's withdrawal letter to the Israeli conference organisers.

It was hard to see this as other than as a bare-faced lie; but it was one which pitted the reputation for veracity of Cambridge University against that of BRICUP and PSC. The reporter who had, based on our websites, first [broken the news](#), (getting 60,000 Facebook shares in one morning), contacted us in something close to panic. His own journalistic reputation now hung by a thread. Indeed, panic stations all round. The only tangible evidence that our version was correct, and that Cambridge was peddling a story that diverged from the truth, was the actual text of the Hawking letter – but that was not part of the statement that had been agreed could be put out.

Fortunately that withdrawal letter of May 3rd had been copied to quite a number of people, and it was possible for the reporter to get hold of it, so verifying his story and our reputation. Within 3 hours Cambridge had to issue a 'correction':

Statement on Professor Hawking and Jerusalem conference

8 June 2013

A University spokesman said:

“We have now received confirmation from Professor Hawking's office that a letter was sent on Friday to the Israeli President's office regarding his decision not to attend the Presidential Conference, based on advice from Palestinian academics that he should respect the boycott.

“We had understood previously that his decision was based purely on health grounds having been advised by doctors not to fly.”

This was a stunning volte face by anyone's standards. Egg on the face doesn't do it justice. And of course it added further to the huge media storm that engulfed the whole issue.

We can only speculate why Cambridge should have taken the extraordinary and deeply risky strategy of denying information that they knew to be factual, and which could be, and was, objectively verified. Could there have been external pressures brought to bear on Cambridge University, strong enough to make them change a story they knew to be true? For an institution of Cambridge's solidity and reputation there are rather few suspects who could pull this off. Possibly a senior internal office holder committed

to Israel? Possibly one or more major donors threatening withdrawal? Possibly pressure from one or other government? This is pure speculation, and we will never know. Unless of course someone somewhere has a record of Cambridge's internal deliberations about what on earth to do about this so inconvenient decision by their most famous member.

Requiescat

Unlike those involved in media manipulation, Stephen Hawking was a person of transcendent honesty and principle, who thought deeply and hard about the sort of society we should try to bring about. It takes intellectual courage and honesty to worry away about what is the right course of action, and then see through the consequences. We never met him, but we have seen the film, and heard the moving tributes from those who did. The world is poorer for his passing, but richer for his life.

Research monograph award from the International Centre on Nonviolent Conflict Research- Researching hunger strikes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

Malaka M. Shwaikh (Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter) and Rebecca Gould (School of Languages, Cultures, Art History and Music, University of Birmingham)*

At a time when hunger strikes increasingly appear like the most effective means of bringing about political change, we are pleased to announce that our joint project on prison resistance and hunger strikes has been honored with a research monograph award by the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict Research (ICNC). This award will enable us to complete a short, co-authored volume, tentatively entitled *Prison Hunger Strikes as Civil Resistance: Generating Political Change in Settler Colonial and Authoritarian Prison Systems*. Our projected publication date is in early 2019, and the volume will be available to all free of charge on the [ICNC website](#), as well as purchasable in print form.

While much work has been done on hunger strikes as a form of civil resistance in Northern Ireland, the study of Palestinian hunger strikes is still in its infancy. Much of the relevant data has yet to be processed and systematically-or

critically-analyzed. Parallel developments in apartheid South Africa, in Turkey, and in Iran, have yet to be brought into comparison with the Palestinian example. The monograph will utilize interviews with hunger strikers collected over the course of several years of research within Gaza and the West Bank, synthesize this primary data with the latest scholarship on global settler colonialism, and situate our six variegated case studies within the comparative study of global civil resistance. We will also review the role of international law in influencing the outcomes of past prison hunger strikes and consider its potential for shaping strikes in the future.

As the first comparative study of prison hunger strikes in a global context, this monograph offers a unique perspective on nonviolent civil resistance. We examine hunger strikes in six different global settings, clarifying the similarities and differences between hunger strikes in the US, Iran, and Turkey on the one hand, and hunger strikes in settler colonial regimes such as Palestine, South Africa, and Ireland on the other. We show that hunger strikes that take place in conditions of occupation (Palestine, South Africa, and Ireland) enable different forms of solidarity between those within the prison and outside, as compared to hunger strikes under conditions of general oppression (not explicitly targeted to any specific group), wherein the imprisoned tend to be marginalized from society at large.

We also examine the motives and demands of both individual and collective hunger strikers and distill the core dynamics of Palestinian hunger strikes, both prior to and after the Second Intifada. We examine how information about the strikes among prisoners is disseminated, consider forced feeding and other pressure tactics imposed by the prison authorities, and chart the negotiations that transpire between prisoners and prison authorities (including medical personnel) in relation to the outcomes these strikes were able to secure.

Our first-hand access to Palestinian hunger strikers gives us a unique lens on hunger strike methods and strategies. We will be interviewing strikers who engaged in this form of resistance from prison and their friends and family, as well as activists, prison staff, lawyers, and prison visitors. We will chronicle the cases of, among others, Randa Mousa, the wife of Palestinian prisoner and hunger striker Khader Adnan (b. 1978). Mousa's activism ultimately led to her husband's release from prison in 2015. While Adnan was on his 55th day of hunger strike, Mousa and her six children were allowed

to visit him to the hospital where he was in critical condition. Their 45-minute visit turned into a long vigil of solidarity on the hospital's sidewalk, demanding Adnan's immediate release. Within a short time, additional supporters (both Israelis and Palestinians, including Palestinian members of the Israeli Knesset) joined Mousa to increase the pressure on the Israeli authorities to release her husband. Under Adnan's window, hundreds of supporters chanted "Our revolution is a human revolution, declared by Khader Adnan." Adnan heard the chants and asked to suspend the negotiations for a few minutes. In her persistence, Mousa went beyond challenging the Israeli authorities who tried to force her to leave; she also resisted the norms of a patriarchal society that forbids women to stay overnight outside their homes.

Our historical data will be drawn from archives (at the Palestinian Ministry of Detainees and Ex-Detainees in Ramallah and the Israeli Ministry of Justice in Tel Aviv), news sources dating back to 1968 (especially Ma'an News Agency, the Palestinian newspapers al-Quds and al-Resalah, and the Hebrew versions of Haaretz and the Times of Israel), and social media in Arabic, Hebrew, and English.

A large volume of our data is original and unique to this project and merits systematic and comparative classification and analysis. Thanks to the ICNC's research monograph award, we will be able to systematically classify and analyze the interview transcripts, social media data, newspaper reports, and archival materials that relate to hunger strikes around the world and especially in the Occupied Territories. All primary and secondary source data will be contextualized and compared. Uncorroborated sources will be identified as such and critically interrogated.

This monograph will be a primary source on hunger strikes from a comparative perspective and the first to systematically analyze the Palestinian case studies. We will identify the different factors that determine success or failure in these strikes, generate a theoretical model that accounts for the outcomes, consider how the agency of the strikers and their supporters influence the outcomes of the strikes, and consider how striking under settler colonialism differs from striking under authoritarian prison conditions. Our comparative framework, along with our rich empirical case studies, will advance our understanding of how nonviolent civil

resistance in general, and striking in particular, can generate positive political change.

Please follow the ICNC website and our project page for further updates:

<https://www.researchgate.net/project/Prison-Strikes-as-Civil-Resistance>.

*Rebecca Gould is a member of BRICUP

Crowdfunding request for a play about Palestinian political prisoners

Einat Weizman.

My name is Einat Weizman. I'm a theater director, a playwright and an actress based in Tel Aviv. I'm also a Palestinian rights activist.

Last year my play "Prisoners of the Occupation" about Palestinian political prisoners was banned after being selected to the Acre theatre festival.

<http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/03/22/israel-s-war-on-culture/>

The issue of political prisoners is a taboo in Israel. For me it's a core issue of the occupation that must be discussed. These days, Ahd Tamimi became known worldwide, but there are a lot more prisoners that their only crime was to resist. The play however tries to shed light on the conditions they are held in.

Through a network of communication, some overt and some covert, I got in contact with former prisoners and with ones that are still serving their sentence. At the beginning of the research, I thought I would write a play based on letters from prison, but eventually the prisoners wrote the play through me. Some scenes were written during meeting face to face and some were sent to me via letter from the prison. The result is a play composed of reconstructions from prison, by prisoners while I gave it a dramatic frame.

As mentioned, the play was banned in Israel and the only Palestinian theatre that first considered supporting it, now no longer can sustain this commitment. Being cut out I decided to launch a crowdfunding campaign. I thought perhaps you know anyone I could approach who would be interested in supporting this play.

<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/prisoners-of-the-occupation-a-play#/>

I am grateful for your attention and appreciate your help.

Contact

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NOTE: The funding will serve to pay many people who have already worked on translating, researching and writing the play and to cover the salaries and payments for the director, assistant director, producer, 5 actors, set designer, light designer, musician, puppet builder, technical team, PR, and advertising. It will also fund making puppets, building the set, lighting, reconstruction of prison spaces, renting a rehearsal space and renting a theatre stage.

Pressure mounts over conference on psychoanalysis

Alice Rothchild, Physician, author, and filmmaker.

This article first appeared in Mondoweiss.

<http://mondoweiss.net/2018/03/pressure-psychoanalysts-conference/>. See also [an earlier report](#) on this proposed conference in our January newsletter (issue no 117)..

An extraordinary response has been unfolding around the scheduling of a mental health conference in Israel. The [International Association for Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy](#) announced plans to book its 2019 international mental health conference in Tel Aviv. Clinicians immediately began raising two major issues:

Why hold an international conference in a country where not all clinicians (e.g., Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, and internationals with a history of activism and/or support for the boycott, divestment, and sanction movement) will likely be granted permits or allowed entry into Israel?

Holding an international conference in a particular country implies some tacit support or at least acceptance of the policies of that country. This is particularly true of Israel where the Israeli

establishment understands that conferences, performances, academic visits, cultural and scientific exchanges imply an acceptance of the status quo. The cultural boycott has made it clear that choosing to hold a major event in Israel is a political statement on the world stage. The fierce debate in Israel about the protest regarding the conference location only confirms this fact.

The IARPP has consistently responded that they do not choose locations for their conferences based on political considerations – rather, they hold conferences in countries that have large, thriving IARPP chapters (and Israel has one). Yet of the many countries that boast thriving IARPP chapters, Israel appears to be the only one where the professionals' ability to access the conference would depend on their ethnicity and political views.

Clinicians also point out the particular irony that the IARPP focuses on relational psychoanalytic approaches to therapy. How [paradoxical](#) it is for a group of therapists grounded in “key relational concepts, such as intersubjectivity and mutual recognition,” who “appreciate the way that the relational theory and practice make room for thinking about the mental health impacts of social and political conditions,” to hold a conference in a country with a history of longstanding human rights abuses, occupation, and siege.

The other looming ethical issue revolves around what is the responsibility of medical and mental health clinicians to attend to the context in which their patients are being treated. How do the social ills, political struggles, economic restrictions, presence or absence of war affect the psychological health of patients? How can clinicians attend to the micro and macro dynamics of healing? One cannot possibly recover from PTSD if the trauma is recurrent and ongoing.

What is the obligation of the therapist to address the environment in which the patient is living?

Israel claims to be a modern Western democracy and this is somewhat the reality for the Jewish Israeli population, particularly those of Ashkenazi descent (white Jewish people from Eastern Europe) who were some of the earlier settlers to Palestine and are now dominant in the political and socio-economic strata. At the same time, Israel is a complicated ethnocracy where Jewish privilege is the foundation of legal and cultural structures and the attitudes of the majority of the Jewish population. One of the consequences of seeing Arabs as less human and less deserving is Israel's longstanding major violations of

Palestinian human rights, the imprisonment and torture of Palestinian children, the widespread use of administrative detention, and a 99-percent+ conviction rate in military courts. There are increasing legal threats to human rights organizations, racist language from the highest echelons of government on down towards Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers (who are currently facing the threat of forcible return to their countries of origin, where many will face torture, enslavement and death) and Palestinians. There is a disproportionate amount of power rested in the ultra-Orthodox, in the rabbinate and the Jewish settler movement, who are often the most racist, Islamophobic, homophobic segments of society.

So what happened? In January 2018, a protest was launched by the [USA and UK Palestine Mental Health Network](#), in collaboration with a leading Palestinian activist clinician, Dr. Samah Jabr, and a petition was created with the support of [Jewish Voice for Peace](#) asking the IARPP to change the location of the 2019 conference. How about Jordan or Cyprus for instance? This stimulated a lively, wrenching, and honest debate within the mental health communities internationally and within Israel, a debate that brought a focus to the occupation of Palestine. IARPP responded by proposing to address the issues raised with pre-conference tours of occupied Palestinian territory, and panels addressing psychoanalytic aspects of occupation.

To date, over 1,300 concerned internationals have signed the [protest petition](#). Even more remarkable, 24 Palestinian mental health clinicians with Israeli citizenship issued a [statement](#) “in solidarity with our Palestinian colleagues in the Occupied West Bank and Besieged Gaza, who suffer daily from oppression, denial of freedom and chronic violence, including frequent killings of civilians by the Israeli Army, which largely go unpunished. We assert that our Palestinian colleagues have a right to resist the Occupation.” They appealed to the IARRP to move the location of the conference to a country where their Palestinian associates would have a greater chance of attending. In addition, 33 Israeli [members of Psychoactive](#): Mental health professionals for human rights, then issued a public statement concerning the contradictions and complications of holding the conference in Tel Aviv and asking for reconsideration of the location.

The Palestinian and Jewish Israelis who signed these letters took on many risks ranging from

interpersonal conflict with their fellow clinicians to professional, legal and extra-legal threats. Their signatures could be seen as a potential response to the call for the boycott of Israel which is now a criminalized offense in the increasingly McCarthyite atmosphere of Israeli society and legal system. Internationals involved in the protest have tremendous respect for the perils that Israeli citizens face when speaking out and urge clinicians to work collegially and in parallel within their own personal limits and political beliefs.

This entire discussion also highlights the fact that the lack of access to the conference in Tel Aviv for clinicians from Gaza and the West Bank due to severe restrictions of permitting and movement mirrors the severe pressures facing clinicians in the region who are mostly unable to attend any international conferences or advanced training let alone obtain medical equipment, medications, etc.

Already the protest movement has created intense discussions and an increasing awareness of the realities on the ground for clinicians who are usually in the shadows. This is a difficult and healthy debate. More is sure to follow.

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Message from the University of Manchester BDS Campaign

A Call for signatures to their [petition](#) on divestment from Israeli War crimes

We are asking the University of Manchester (UoM) to divest from companies that are complicit in Israel's war crimes. UoM is the only University in the country to hold social responsibility in its top 3 values, yet infringes upon its own Socially Responsible Investment policy every day by holding investments in these companies. Therefore, we feel that the University should adhere to its own policy and divest from companies who help sustain Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian land as well as Israel's apartheid regime.

One of these companies is Caterpillar, who UoM currently hold around £2,114,435.97 worth of shares in. Caterpillar supply armored bulldozers to the Israeli army (IDF) for the specific purpose of demolishing Palestinian homes, factories, agricultural land and civilian infrastructure in illegally occupied territory. This is a violation

of international law and UoM is complicit in this by holding investments in Caterpillar.

The UN Human Rights Council has included Caterpillar in their blacklist of companies that have products known to be used in violating the human rights of civilians and actively breaking international law. It could not be any clearer that UoM's investments in Caterpillar break the University's own Socially Responsible Investment policy, yet they still continue with these investments. This can go on no longer.

As students, we cannot sit by silently as our tuition fees are used to systematically oppress and infringe on basic human rights.

Please sign and circulate

With solidarity,
Huda Ammori
UoM BDS Campaign

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[Researching Assisted Reproduction in Israel/Palestine: A Fertile Ground for Mayhem](#)

The blog post by [Dr Sigrid Vertommen](#) (Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Kings College London) in the link above describes the outcome of her qualitative research in to Israel's reproductive policies since 2010 . It also describes how, when she delivered a lecture on the research to an academic audience at Warwick University, she faced a torrent of abuse and false accusations of anti-semitism from those who had not attended the lecture. These led to threatening emails and attempts to defame her through social media. The implications for academic freedom are clear and very concerning.

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BDS News from Ireland and the US

Irish Students vote to support justice and human rights for Palestine by backing BDS campaign.

Union of Students in Ireland (USI), April 5th 2018

Today, the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) has voted to support justice and human rights for Palestine at the annual student Congress in

Galway. The motion came before over 250 students from across Ireland voting to join the global movement for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel, until it ends the occupation and complies with international law. Speaking after the vote, USI President Michael Kerrigan said,

“The students of Ireland have today made the historic decision to support the people of Palestine. This movement attempts to exert economic and political pressure on Israel until it’s illegal siege of Gaza and its illegal occupation of the West Bank, and agrees to abide by International law and all UN Resolutions against it.”

Robert Murtagh from Queen’s University Belfast Students’ Union, the student who proposed the motion, said,

“I’m happy to see this motion pass today. Let the students of Ireland continue follow in Madiba’s footsteps and stand with the people of Palestine in their struggle for freedom. We must join with our Union comrades at Trinity, NUIG, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, NUS, Universities and Colleges Union, NUS-USI and many others in supporting justice and human rights for the people of Palestine. We always have been and must continue to be on the right side of history.”

The motion calls for USI to inform members of the background to the situation in Israel/Palestine and to commemorate Palestine Solidarity Day, working with any relevant groups such as student societies and civil society organisations local to each of our campuses.

USI will also support an Academic Boycott of Israeli Higher Education institutions complicit in normalising, providing intellectual cover for, and supporting settler-colonialism. This includes policies that amount to Apartheid, encouraging recruitment to the Israeli Defence Forces, and providing support to the militarist occupation of Palestine.

USI is the national representative body for the 374,000 students in third level education on the Island of Ireland. The annual Congress is taking place from the 3rd to the 6th of April in Ballinasloe, Galway. Motions being debated include national affairs, welfare, academic affairs, the Irish language and international affairs.

See text of motion [here](#) .

[Trinity College Dublin students vote to support BDS](#)

Students have voted for Trinity College Dublin Students’ Union (TCDSU) to support the Boycott, Divest, Sanctions movement against Israel and work towards its implementation in Trinity. BDS won the support of 1287 students, representing 64.5% of the total poll of 2050. The referendum saw the highest turnout in recent years, with 2,316 students voting in total for both referenda. As the boycotting of the Israeli State is a long-term policy, it required that 60% or above of the students balloted voted in its favour, according to TCDSU’s constitution.

The Trinity BDS Campaign group want TCDSU to comply with the “principles of BDS in all Student Union shops, trade, business and other Union operations”. In addition, they are looking for the establishment of a “BDS implementation group open to all members of the union that will ensure compliance” with the movement, and to “lobby government and relevant external organisations to support BDS and the Palestinian anti-apartheid cause”.

Both the incoming TCDSU President Shane De Rís and President-elect of the Graduate Students’ Union (GSU) Oisín Vince Coulter have [voiced their support for BDS](#) and urged students to vote in its favour.

De Rís spoke to Trinity News before the vote: “It isn’t uncommon for students and students unions to campaign for the rights of oppressed people at home and around the globe. If we can help make a difference by boycotting, divesting, and sanctioning those organisations complicit the oppression of the Palestinian people, then I think it worthwhile to do so. Vince Coulter added: “We need to show solidarity again with the struggle of the Palestinian people for peace, justice and human rights.”

Over 200 more students voted in the BDS and ‘opt out’ referenda than voted on the reunification of Ireland last year. In the referendum on the development of a Students’ Centre 1,146 people voted, which passed. In the referendum on the development of a Students’ Centre, 1,146 people voted, which passed.

The referendum on the boycott of the Israeli state is being held after a group of students gathered the necessary 500 signatures to put the vote to the student body. SU Council voted on the matter last April, opting to reject the motion to support BDS.

Dublin City Council votes to support BDS

Press Release from *the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign*

Monday 9th April 2018

The Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC) tonight warmly welcomed the vote by Dublin City Council to formally support and endorse the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement for freedom, justice and equality. The motion, voted for tonight by a majority of Councillors, also commits the council to discontinue all business contracts it has with Hewlett-Packard (HP) and its spin-off DXC Technology due to these companies' provision and operation of "much of the technology infrastructure that Israel uses to maintain its system of apartheid and settler colonialism over the Palestinian people." In a separate motion, the council voted to call on the Irish government to expel the Israeli Ambassador.

IPSC Chairperson Fatin Al Tamimi praised the motions saying, "speaking as a Palestinian and a Dubliner I'm so proud that the local government of my adoptive city has voted to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom, justice and equality. It is wonderful that Dublin City Council will now become part of the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement called for by Palestinian civil society. It is particularly welcome that the council chose to focus on Hewlett-Packard and its spin-off DXC, as these companies have been profiteering from the violent oppression of Palestinians and illegal colonisation of their land."

Ms. Tamimi thanked the Council for their principled stance, even in the face of interference by the Israeli Embassy: "I would like to sincerely thank all the councillors who voted in favour of the motion, in particular People Before Profit Councillor John Lyons for moving the motion on BDS. It is concerning that, once again, officials of the Israeli Embassy sought to attempt to interfere in Irish democracy by writing to the Lord Mayor demanding he block the motion from even being discussed. I, therefore, thank the Lord Mayor of Dublin for his support for the motion and refusing to accede to the demands of the Israeli Ambassador. I also thank the councillors who moved and voted for the motion supporting the expulsion of the Israeli Ambassador – showing that the majority of Dublin's councillors do not

welcome this professional apologist for war crimes and human rights violations."

Ms Tamimi concluded, saying that: "BDS is the most effective way for international supporters of Palestinians rights to put pressure on the Israeli state to end its decades of colonial oppression of my people. It is especially poignant that this motion was passed as we approach the 70th anniversary of the Nakba, the violent dispossession of two third of the indigenous Palestinians in 1948 – a dispossession that continues to this day, and which most recently has seen the murder of some 30 unarmed Palestinians in Gaza as they protest for their Right of Return mandated under international law. I would urge all people who care about the rights of Palestinians to get active in the BDS movement in Ireland and join organisations like the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Academics for Palestine, Students for Justice in Palestine, Trade Union Friends of Palestine, Sadaka, and others to help Palestinians achieve freedom. Finally, we would urge other councils around Ireland to emulate Dublin by adopting similar motions in support of the rights of the people of the Palestine."

Statement from the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC)- the largest coalition in Palestinian civil society, which leads and supports the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement for Palestinian rights

"Dublin has offered the strongest response to date to Israel's latest massacre against unarmed Palestinian protesters in the occupied and besieged Gaza Strip. This is the most impressive win yet for the BDS movement in 2018."

April 11th, 2018

See full details [here](#)

50 New York University Student groups endorse Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement for Palestinian Human Rights

We, the undersigned student groups, pledge to participate in the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement for Palestinian human rights by

Boycotting Israeli goods and goods manufactured in the Occupied Territories, except for those manufactured by Palestinians. For a list of what to

boycott, visit <https://bdsmovement.net/get-involved/what-to-boycott>

- Boycotting Israeli academic institutions and conferences sponsored by the State of Israel
- Boycotting NYU's pro-Israel clubs, Realize Israel and TorchPAC, by not co-sponsoring events with them, as well as boycotting off-campus pro-Israel groups such as Birthright-Taglit, StandWithUs, Christians United for Israel, the Maccabee Task Force, Mosaic United, Zionist Organization of America, American Israeli Political Action Committee, and the Anti-Defamation League
- Endorsing the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement
- Calling on NYU to divest its holdings from companies and funds that are complicit in the Israeli occupation of Palestine
- Committing to continually recognizing indigenous land and sovereignty

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba (catastrophe), during which more than 700,000 Palestinians were violently expelled from their homes by Zionist militias, and of the establishment of the State of Israel, which continues its campaign of ethnic cleansing of Palestine to this day in the form of Israel's military occupation of the West Bank and the Golan Heights and brutal siege of Gaza.

We support the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement for Palestinian human rights as it is a non-violent method of resisting Israeli apartheid from abroad. We call on NYU to divest its holdings from companies and funds that are complicit in the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, BDS demands action by Israel to comply with international law. In just over a decade, BDS has blossomed to a global movement of religious organizations, academic associations, unions, and activist movements worldwide, and we are proud to be a part of this struggle for justice.

Signed

See [here](#) for the full lists of signatories

News from other Campaigns

Belgian Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israel (BACBI)
See their monthly newsletter- [Newsletter no 34-April 2018](#)

US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

<http://www.usacbi.org/>

News from the Association of Academics for the Respect of International Law in Palestine (AURDIP)

<http://www.aurdip.fr/?lang=en>

Notices

Speakers: BRICUP is always willing to help provide speakers for meetings. All such requests and any comments or suggestions concerning this Newsletter are welcome.

Email them to: newsletter@bricup.org.uk

Register as a supporter of BRICUP

You can register as a supporter of BRICUP and of the academic and cultural boycott of Israel [by completing this form](#).

We recognise that many individuals may wish to support our aims by private actions without wishing to be publicly identified. Supporters receive our regular newsletter by email and receive occasional emails giving details of urgent developments and of ways to support our activities. We do not disclose the names of our supporters to anyone outside BRICUP or share them with any other organisation.

Financial support for BRICUP

We welcome one-off donations, but we can plan our work much better if people pledge regular payments by standing order. You can [download a justanding order form](#) here.

One-off donations may be made by sending a cheque to the Treasurer, at BRICUP, BM

BRICUP, London, WC1N 3XX, UK or by
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