

BRICUP

British Committee for the
Universities of Palestine

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BRICUP’s focus

Editor

At a recent meeting BRICUP’s committee agreed a broadening of its focus. Since its formation in 2004 BRICUP has organised exclusively around issues connected to academic boycott, or support for Palestinian universities. (We have also engaged with cultural boycott, but less so since the foundation of Artists for Palestine UK.) This limitation recognises that there are many groups and websites dealing with the various dimensions of the Palestinian struggle for their rights, and of Israeli repression, and we don’t wish or need to duplicate their work. This Newsletter has pursued the same policy.

In our recent internal discussion BRICUP decided that we could contribute extra value in some related areas without any danger of duplication. As a result of its work over some decade and a half, BRICUP is in touch with a network of academics, in the UK and elsewhere, who are committed supporters of the Palestinian cause. This Newsletter therefore has an extensive reach both nationally and internationally and its contributors have a reputation as reliable sources of news and comment.

The relaxation of BRICUP’s exclusion rule means that, in future, we will from time to time comment on, provide information on, or campaign on a wider range of issues. Boycott will still be our most committed area. But issues do arise not infrequently which have an academic aspect either in the UK, Israel, Palestine or elsewhere that has a direct or indirect relevance to the issue of freedom for Palestine. We will now occasionally be covering them in this Newsletter. One such case is the coordinated action in December by a number of UK student Labour Societies to criticise a prominent Labour MP whose position on Israel/Palestine is exemplary. There is a report on this development in the current Newsletter.

The Latest Antisemite

Jonathan Rosenhead

British Universities have become a site of struggle between supporters of Palestine and defenders of Israel, with antisemitism claims front and central. It is Labour MP Chris Williamson who is currently at the eye of the storm. He is being constructed by his opponents into the latest in a string of totemic targets in a campaign which deploys allegations of antisemitism as a tool of politics. To date these targets have been Ken Livingstone, Jenny Tonge and the IHRA scriptures – and each has been successful. It is well understood that the ultimate target is Jeremy Corbyn, which is why fire is now being directed at Williamson as his most high-profile defender.

In November three student Labour Clubs – University College London, Birkbeck College and the London School of Economics – issued identical statements. They announced that “we will no longer be campaigning for that [Westminster] CLP and we urge other Labour clubs to do the same”. The reason? - that Westminster Constituency Labour Party had invited Chris Williamson to speak at a meeting. Their statements described him as an “anti-Semite”.

Back in May three other student Labour Clubs (in Chester, Swansea and Hull) called for [Williamson to be disciplined](#) “for undermining the fight against antisemitism”. Its timing suggests that it was a response to his support for Marc Wadsworth, a black anti-racist activist who was expelled from the Party in a [widely criticised decision](#).

There had been attacks on Williamson before, but this was a definite toughening up of the rhetoric against him. Back in August the Jewish Labour Movement (JLM) [called](#) for Williamson to have his Labour membership suspended because he had defended Labour activists who use language “perceived as antisemitic.” JLM is an organisation of Jews and non-Jews, who do not need to be Party members. It is affiliated to the World Zionist Organisation through its membership of the World Labour Zionist Movement. JLM has been a leader of the campaign to have the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) document, which purports to re-define

antisemitism, taken into Labour’s internal disciplinary processes.

There are some hopes that the Westminster seat might be captured by Labour at the next election. None of the three London colleges are within that constituency, but all are close by and so might otherwise be expected to provide support to the Westminster Labour candidate when an election happens. Some Labour clubs outside London have also joined in the announced boycott – but the absence of shock troops from, for example, Liverpool will be less keenly felt.

By any standards this is a bizarre event: student Labour clubs seemingly trying to ‘no platform’ not just a party member, but someone selected by due process as a Labour candidate, and then endorsed by the electorate. The explanation has two components, with Jeremy Corbyn at their intersection.

Anyone paying proper attention to UK politics will be aware that Corbyn has been under relentless media assault for the three years he has been Leader of the Labour Party. The most consistent line of attack has been that he is soft on antisemitism in the Labour Party, or even (outrageously) that this notorious anti-racist is himself antisemitic. These claims are undoubtedly legally actionable – but taking such action would simply give the lies a new burst of airtime.

The two reasons why Corbyn is under attack are: that he is facilitating a move of the Labour Party to the left (though he is still well to the right of Prime Minister Harold Wilson in the 60’s and 70’s), and that he is a lifelong supporter of Palestinian rights. This gives both unconditional supporters of Israel and many of the Labour MPs selected in the Blair years a reason to prefer someone (anyone?) other than Corbyn in the office of Leader, let alone Prime Minister. With mainstream media apparently on board with this world view, and the timely availability of results from detailed digging in the historical record for evidence capable of malign innuendo, the campaign to produce smoke without a trace of fire has been a brilliant success.

In this situation most Labour MPs have run for cover. It was noticeable at a Palestine Solidarity Campaign rally in Whitehall in April 2018 that not a single Labour MP would speak on the platform. Palestine has become a minefield topic.

Chris Williamson is the exception to this general rule.

Labour Students, the national organisation for university Labour clubs, has a long history of providing future MPs and other key figures on the right of the party. John Mann, Tom Watson, Michael Dugher, Caroline Flint, John Woodcock and Iain McNicol come to mind. Labour Students also has something of a reputation for dirty politics – for example, Labour clubs with a predominantly left-wing membership have sometimes found themselves denied affiliation or delegates to the annual conference. It does appear, from the at least six university Labour clubs which have been involved in attacks on Williamson, that the anti-Corbyn (perhaps one might say Blairite) tendency is still alive and kicking in student Labour politics.

The decisions of the three London student clubs to ‘No Platform’ Chris Williamson appear to have been taken jointly (the announcements came out on the same day, using the same wording). There was evidently enough time for some pre-planning, but not, it seems, enough to consult the membership: in each case the decision was taken by the club committee without reference to its members. It is hard to know how far their memberships would agree with this public rubbishing of a Corbyn loyalist, but unlikely. Generally [polls](#) have shown younger respondents very well disposed towards Corbyn.

The strategy of trying to brand critics of Israel as antisemitic originates with the Israeli government itself. This strategy [was developed](#) in response to the second intifada and to the growth of the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in the early 2000s. Academic boycott in particular has been identified by government and state officials up to and including the President as one of only 2 existential threats facing Israel. A well-funded government department, the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, was set up in 2006 to neutralise them. One of its key approaches is to ‘delegitimize the delegitimizers’. To distort the ancient Greek saying, those whom the State of Israel would destroy must first be declared antisemitic.

In the USA this offensive has been at its most fierce on the nation’s campuses – witness the [recent case](#) of Professor Mark Lamont Hill. In the UK the terrain of the Labour Party has been the

principal recent battleground. But campuses have not been immune, witness the annual onslaught against Israeli Apartheid Week, and the repeated disruptions by pro-Zionist demonstrators of campus meetings about Israel/Palestine – especially if sponsored by Jewish organisations. And this at a time when the real antisemites are out there on the streets in their thousands.

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The Britain-Israel partnership driving ‘antisemitism’ allegations: thoughts on a counter-strategy

Les Levidow

With the increasing mobilisation of Far Right forces in recent years, antisemitic attacks have become a more serious threat. However, a high-profile campaign has disgracefully targeted an ‘antisemitism problem’ in the Labour Party and the wider Palestine solidarity movement. For nearly three years, the movement has been countering the false allegations.

Despite our great efforts, the intimidation campaign has remained pervasive and stable. How and why? It has systematically elided the categories of Jew and Zionist. Moreover a prevalent stereotype of the Jew-as-Zionist, consequently vulnerable to antisemitism, provides a shield and displacement for the state’s pro-Israel commitments. The institutional drivers and strategic implications are discussed in this article; see hyperlinks and references list for documentary sources.

‘Offence’ conflated with antisemitism

Since [spring 2016](#) there has been a high-profile, escalating campaign of false allegations against pro-Palestine activists. A prime target has been the Labour Party, with allegations that its leadership had failed to address its alleged internal antisemitism problem. The Palestine solidarity movement has responded by distinguishing between real antisemitism, and false allegations which [weaponise](#) antisemitism to protect Israel, not Jews.



It's not anti-Semitic to oppose Zionism, logo at www.freespeechonisrael.org.uk

In the intimidation campaign, a key weapon has been the so-called 'IHRA definition', misnomer for a long document. Although the short definition was approved by an IHRA meeting, its website subsequently posted a long guidance document that [lacks endorsement](#) by any international body. The long document has 11 examples, 7 referring to Israel, some conflating antisemitism with criticism of that state. In particular, it is supposedly antisemitic to describe the Israeli regime as 'a racist endeavour'; consequently, the phrase '[apartheid Israel](#)' becomes a taboo. On this basis, the guidance document has served to censor speech and deny venues for events, especially in universities during Israeli Apartheid Week. Efforts to counter the intimidation campaign have been informed by Jewish-led pro-Palestine groups, especially Free Speech on Israel and more recently [Jewish Voice for Labour](#) (see references).

Despite our protests, politicians have generally evaded any engagement with the dispute over what constitutes antisemitism. Instead they accept purely subjective criteria, namely: a remark is antisemitic if a Jewish person claims that it is. Often politicians conflate antisemitism with any comments 'offensive to Jews', often corresponding with Israel examples in the IHRA document.

To justify these subjective criteria, 'the Macpherson principle' has been cited by diverse politicians such as New Labour MPs and Caroline Lucas of the Green Party (despite its official support for the BDS campaign). Thus they distort Macpherson's recommendation that any claim about a racist incident should be properly recorded and investigated – not that the claim should be automatically accepted. In this way, politicians conveniently avoid any responsibility for judgements about what is or is not antisemitic,

as well as any responsibility for the IHRA guidance as a political weapon.

Since 2016 the intimidation campaign has united diverse political forces (the UK government, the entire mass media, most of the Parliamentary Labour Party, etc.) around a common motive to undermine the pro-Corbyn leadership of the Labour Party. By mid-2018 that leadership had replaced its anti-Corbyn General Secretary and consolidated its control over the Labour Party administration. Nevertheless it is still formally investigating pro-Palestine members for statements which 'cause offence' (often related to IHRA examples) and thus supposedly 'bring the Party into disrepute'.

Israel lobby: hijack or partner?

How to explain such broad, enduring cross-institutional complicity with the intimidation campaign? Has the Israel lobby hijacked British institutions? Efforts to do so were well documented by the 2017 [Al Jazeera exposé](#) of Israeli funding for lobby groups within the Labour Party. As another example, the UK counter-extremism Prevent programme has actively stigmatised and suppressed criticism of Israel as 'extremist', thus appearing to serve that regime.



Credit: Carlos Latuff

Rather than an Israeli hijack of UK institutions, however, the situation can be understood nearly the other way around, namely: the Israel lobby's power has always depended on the agenda and power of the British state in the broad sense. In particular we have seen the following: government Ministries trying to prevent boycotts of Israel (or of complicit companies), political parties disciplining members on false grounds, university administrations trying to deter Palestine solidarity activities; and Local Authorities dismissing staff for anti-Israel statements made

outside of a work context. These executive actions encourage more false ‘antisemitism’ allegations by pro-Israel groups, which thereby gain the deceptive appearance of great power.

This partnership between the Israel lobby and British institutions continues their long-time role in protecting the Zionist colonisation project since a century ago. Back in 1916 Jerusalem’s [first British governor](#) envisaged a future Jewish state as ‘a little loyal Jewish Ulster in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism’. Indeed, Western powers still depend on Israel for counter-insurgency against independent political forces in the region. This original driver in British imperial interests (and later neo-colonial strategies) continues today, more recently reinforced by the UK’s pervasive deference to US foreign policy.

As an extra driver, the European [military-industrial-academic-security complex](#) has been increasingly integrated with its Israeli counterpart. This freely uses Palestine as a convenient laboratory for testing ‘security’ technologies, both as a research and marketing advantage for global sales. This partnership has been abundantly financed by the EU framework programme on ‘Security Challenges’. As in many such cases of military design and intent, the phrase ‘dual use’ would be an understatement.

Such institutional linkages and usages are exemplified by the University of Manchester’s [graphene research](#); its results are held by a commercial spin-out, in turn licenced to the Israeli arms industry. The BDS campaign is a potential threat to academic complicity of this kind. Perhaps not coincidentally, in 2017 the University systematically deployed the IHRA criteria against the activities of its student Palestine Society. This example highlights how the ‘antisemitism’ intimidation campaign protects the material interests of a UK-Israel partnership.

‘Community cohesion’ as a shield and pretext

Beyond universities, the government has sought to protect the UK-Israel partnership from attempts by Local Authorities to implement boycott or divestment policies. As the government [argued](#) in 2016, such local boycotts ‘can damage integration and community cohesion within the United Kingdom, hinder Britain’s export trade, and harm foreign relations to the detriment of Britain’s economic and international security’. Although such ‘damage’ is relevant to many

issues and investments, the government policy sought especially to suppress the pro-Palestine BDS campaign.

For this purpose, ‘community cohesion’ means protecting the sensibilities of ‘the Jewish community’, presumed to be homogeneously pro-Israel, while disregarding or marginalising all other Jews. This agenda promotes a double exceptionalism. Amongst the various forms of race hatred, only antisemitism is conflated with a political identity, in fact shared by only some of the relevant ‘community’. Uniquely this serves to equate ‘offensive’ comments with racist ones, in order to censor or even discipline such comments, while separating antisemitism from racism in general.

What drives this agenda? A deeper explanation is suggested by an article by the SOAS academic [Sai Englert](#) (2018): ‘Jewish communities in Britain are being directly mobilised as a shield, behind which the government can hide to defend its own trade and international-policy choices, while also undermining political freedoms in the UK.’ This state-led agenda extends a long history of racializing colonial peoples abroad and ethnic minorities in the UK. A century ago, Jews were demonised as a danger to Britain’s Christian culture. Indeed, before and during the Nazi regime, many Jewish refugees were blocked by Western states.

However, the dominant narrative has since turned Jews into a vulnerable group helping to protect Israel and thus Western civilisation. When Western states commemorate the Holocaust, such events become a tool for claims to oppose racism and protect Jews from antisemitism today, while disguising the state’s institutional racism against other minority groups. (This pervasive role has analogies with state philosemitism in France, likewise constructing and instrumentalising ‘the Jewish community’; see the 2015 [article](#) by [Houria Bouteldja](#)).

As [Englert](#) further argues, ‘Jews can then become part of a Western hegemonic culture, which has recently discovered itself to be Judeo-Christian only a few decades after the Nazi genocide, on the condition that their history becomes a pillar of the state’s official history, rather than a boulder to bring it tumbling down.’ The Jew is reconstructed as defending the West’s values in the face of barbarism. This essentialisation paints

Jews in a seemingly positive light. Yet ‘the underlying logic is a top-down structuring of Jewish identification by the Western state’. Under the banner of Zionism, Jews are mobilised against negatively racialised communities and critics of the state’s foreign policy (says Englert).

In this way the state narrative has been readily extended to demonise anti-Zionist forces as the main antisemitic threat, contrary to statistical analyses blaming mainly the Far Right. This state agenda becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: many Jews become frightened, so feel less secure and identify more strongly with Israel. In reality, in the general rise of overt racism since the 2016 Brexit referendum, other minority groups have been the main targets of physical attack. Yet nearly one-third of British Jews are considering emigrating because of safety fears ([The Guardian](#), 10.12.2018). The [pro-Israel Jewish press](#) even warned that a Corbyn-led government would ‘pose an existential threat to Jewish life in this country’ (Jewish Chronicle, 25.07.2018). It became thinkable that their readers would respond with fear – rather than ridicule. In effect, the state-led agenda has served to entrap Jews, politically and psychologically.

Strategic implications

As this analysis has argued, the British state displaces its pro-Israel commitments onto ‘the Jewish community’, constructed as Zionist and thus vulnerable to antisemitism. This provides a convenient shield for the state’s partnership with the Zionist colonisation project. This agenda aggravates societal divisions – frightening Jews and dividing them from each other, while also separating them from the Left and Muslims.



Such posters appeared in September 2018, just after the Labour Party’s [NEC adopted](#) the IHRA document with all the examples.

This analysis suggests the need for a counter-strategy encompassing several actions:

Attack the state construction of the Jew-as-Zionist for pressing Jews into such an identity, conflating antisemitism with mere ‘offence’, shielding the state’s pro-Israel commitments, and disguising its power as the Israel lobby’s power.

Target real antisemitic conduct (especially of the far Right) within a general struggle against racism in all its forms, in creative ways which can overcome societal divisions and fears.

Defend those who are falsely accused of antisemitism or are accused simply of ‘offensive comments’.

Oppose their persecution or censorship within disciplinary procedures of political parties, Local Authorities, universities, etc.

Explain why the Zionist colonisation project has always been ‘a racist endeavour’ (key taboo in the IHRA examples), thus clarifying the source of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Extend the BDS campaign against institutions complicit with the Zionist apartheid settler-colonial regime.

How to combine those actions in effective ways? This ambitious task warrants more strategic discussion.

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BDS NEWS

Good Cultural Boycott news from the Eurovisons Song Contest

“So, we got asked to enter EUROVISION 2019 to represent the UK but it’s being held in ISRAEL so that’s a NO from us!” - [The Tuts Band](#).

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Nobel laureate George P. Smith speaks about BDS

Message from the BDS National Committee

Please watch and share [this video](#) of 2018 Nobel Laureate (for Chemistry) George P Smith speaking about BDS.:

Prof. George P. Smith, 2018 Nobel laureate in Chemistry, spoke about BDS during his trip to Stockholm, Sweden, Dec 2018.

Quotes from Professor Smith

“People of conscience all over the world have an obligation to pay attention to abuses of human rights, like [Israel’s] 71-year regime of dispossession and subjugation.”

"The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, that 170 Palestinian civil society organizations called for in 2005, calls for boycotting Israel until it meets some ordinary requirements, some minimal requirements, of moral behavior on the part of nations.

"Joining the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement is a platform to persuade other people of conscience that this is something that needs our attention. And there are many honorable reasons, especially for people in the United States, to focus on this issue of great moral impact."

Thank you, Prof. Smith, for your principled support!

NEWS FROM ACADEMIA

Principal of King’s College London brands Israel Apartheid Week ‘abhorrent’

Report in the Jewish News

In an address to the Board of Deputies on January 20th, Professor Ed Byrne, the Principal of King’s College, London announced that he “abhorred” Israel Apartheid Week, that he and his staff had been “working closely with the Jewish Society and the Board of Deputies and others for over a year now” to resolve problems” and that he will “continue to make it very clear at the university level that we have no toleration for this at all and will continue to work with the student union to try to develop a collegiate position where the students at Kings don’t endorse it.”

This information was drawn from [a report](#) which appeared on January 21st in the Jewish News. BRICUP will monitor and report on the response from students and staff on due course.

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Palestinian Professor sues San Francisco State University for discrimination

from Mondoweiss, 21st January, 2019.

Last week, lawyers for [Professor Rabab Abdulhadi](#) filed a suit in US District Court against San Francisco State University (SFSU), and top administrators including President Leslie Wong, seeking a permanent court judgment to protect the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas (AMED) program and to protect the civil rights and freedom of speech of AMED director, Professor Abdulhadi, and her students.

SFSU hired Dr. Abdulhadi in 2006 with a written promise to build a real program. “For ten years, they have refused contractually agreed support for AMED Studies. They broke their commitment to

me and to the AMED community, but we built the program anyway,” said Dr. Abdulhadi. “They’ve been trying to dismantle it and prevent its institutionalization ever since. Professor Rabab AbdulhadiNow they’re trying to destroy it,” said Mark Kleiman, one of the lawyers for Dr. Abdulhadi.

Read the whole article in the Electronic Intifada [here](#) .

See [here](#) and [here](#) for news of the campaign in support of Professor Abdulhadi

Marc Lamont Hill’s detractors are the true Anti-semites

Susan Abulhawa in Counterpunch December 17th 2018.

Temple University’s administration announced the unsurprising news that it has found no grounds to punish or investigate Professor Marc Lamont Hill for his speech at the United Nations on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Yet, the university’s Board of Trustees felt compelled, nonetheless, to issue a statement further maligning Dr Hill, albeit indirectly this time, by quoting the slanderous language of others against him.

Read the full article, in which Susan Abulhawa discusses how Temple University chose to hold its professor responsible, not for his words, but for the ways in which others interpret them, [here](#)

Gender Segregation at Israel's Universities Spreading to the Whole Campus, Warning from the Israeli High Court of Justice

Haaretz: January 18th, 2019

Earlier this month, The Israeli High Court of Justice criticized the country’s Council for Higher Education week for letting gender segregation spread from classrooms to public areas on campuses, with some institutions holding separate study days for men and women.

According to the council, gender segregation is allowed only in courses for [ultra-Orthodox](#) B.A. students, and only inside classrooms. But members of the Court concluded that the segregation was expanding in an unacceptable way, spreading in to public spaces and libraries while the Council turned a blind eye.

The Council had informed the High Court there was [nothing wrong with various aspects of segregation](#) – for example, separate study days or separate campuses – on condition that it wasn’t “forced.” However, in light of the slower-than-expected rise in the number of ultra-Orthodox students, the Council is considering expanding the segregation to other groups as a fast and simple way to increase the number of students in programs intended for ultra-Orthodox students only.

Among the institutions that have violated the regulations are Bar-Ilan University, the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, the Jerusalem College of Technology and the Achva, Gordon, Ashkelon, Rupin, Hadassah and Ono academic colleges.

Read the full article [here](#)

Read more here: [Israel’s creeping gender segregation: Dress codes and separate entrances: Gender segregation in Israeli universities expands beyond the classroom](#)

California Scholars for Freedom and Canary Mission

A call to the University of California Regents: Distance yourself from Canary Mission

This statement was jointly written by Lisa Rofel, Margaret Ferguson, Sang Hea Kil, Brooke Lober, and David Palumbo-Liu,

U.S. campuses are sites of political controversy and, at their best, spaces for debate and engagement across different perspectives. At universities across the U.S., the question of whether and how professors and students can exercise free speech has emerged as the most salient of our time. Often ignored in the discussion of academic freedom is the power dynamic inherent to the space of communication.

On campuses, both funding and political influence privilege certain actors to exercise “free speech,” while others are censored and even vilified. In this climate, exposure of power is in itself a political act. The California Scholars for Academic Freedom has decided to be pro-active in challenging the online website the Canary Mission, because of the serious harm it has caused to students and faculty in California institutions of higher learning and, more broadly, to academic freedom in the United States. One of our first actions was to attend a University of California Regents meeting, held on January 16-17, 2019 to demand that they distance themselves publicly from the Canary Mission and also from UC donors who have contributed to supporting the Canary Mission.

Continue reading the statement [here](#)

More on Canary Mission [here](#)

About California Scholars for Academic Freedom (CS4AF)

CSAF is a group of scholars who defend academic freedom, the right of shared governance, and the First Amendment rights of faculty and students in the academy and beyond. They recognize that violations of academic freedom anywhere are threats to academic freedom everywhere. California Scholars for Academic Freedom investigates legislative and administrative infringements on freedom of speech and assembly, and it raises the consciousness of politicians, university regents and administrators, faculty, students and the public at large through open letters, press releases, petitions, statements, and articles.

A Texas Elementary School Speech Pathologist Refuses to sign a pro-Israel oath -and loses her job

Editor

Bahia Amawi is a children’s speech pathologist who has worked for the last nine years with developmentally disabled, autistic, and speech-impaired elementary school students in Austin, Texas. In mid December last year, she was told that she can no longer work with the public school district, having refused to sign an oath

vowing that she “does not” and “will not” engage in a boycott of Israel or “otherwise take any action that is intended to inflict economic harm” on that foreign nation. [A lawsuit on her behalf](#) has now been filed in a federal court in the Western District of Texas, alleging a violation of her First Amendment right of free speech. For more details see [this article by Glenn Greenwald](#) and [an interview with Bahia Amawi](#) with Bahia Amawi herself.

Trump’s extended reach

A message from the President of the American University of Beirut

Dear AUB Alumni and Friends,

The American University of Beirut (AUB) is an institution that puts its students first and is committed to ensuring they have the opportunity to complete their education whenever possible.

Earlier in January, the university was informed by representatives of the US government that students from the West Bank and Gaza would no longer be eligible for comprehensive scholarships under its US-Middle East Partnership Initiative-Tomorrow’s Leaders (MEPI-TL) program and that their funding would cease effective January 31, 2019. It was explained that suspension of assistance to all projects in the Palestinian Authority and to citizens of those areas was an unintended consequence of the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 (ATCA) passed by Congress on October 3 last year.

The MEPI-TL program has been in operation since 2007 after being launched by the State Department’s Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs’ Office of Assistance Coordination with the aim of supporting civic-minded, intellectually able, and professionally skilled students from around the MENA region to become future leaders in their communities. AUB has 82 currently-enrolled students on the program, 16 of whom are from the West Bank and Gaza.

In order to ensure that these outstanding Palestinian scholars are able to continue their education, AUB will secure the \$1.2 million in funds necessary to ensure that they can complete their courses up to graduation, without redirecting

any of our already considerable financial aid commitments from other deserving and needy students. We are also working with our partners at the US Embassy in Beirut and in Washington, DC to mitigate the impact of ATCA on the MEPI-TL program.

At the university, we feel a profound sense of obligation to all of our students and our decision to support Palestinian scholars of the MEPI-TL program is aligned with the values of AUB which are aspirational, egalitarian, and enduring.

Best regards,

Fadlo R. Khuri, MD
President

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Sign the petition : Academic Institutions must defend free speech

Issued by the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity:

Petition Text

We, the undersigned, oppose the coordinated campaign to deny academics their free speech rights due to their defense of Palestinian rights and criticism of the policies and practices of the state of Israel. Temple University in Philadelphia, USA and the University of Sydney, Australia have been under great pressure to fire, respectively, Marc Lamont Hill and Tim Anderson, both senior academics at their institutions, for these reasons. Steven Salaita and Norman Finkelstein have already had their careers destroyed by such attacks. Hatem Bazian, Ahlam Muhtaseb, William Robinson, Rabab Abdulhadi and others have also been threatened.

The ostensible justification for such action is commonly known as the “Palestinian exception” to the principle of free speech. One may freely criticize and disrespect governments – including one’s own – religions, political beliefs, personal appearance and nearly everything else except the actions and policies of the state of Israel. Those who dare to do so will become the focus of well-financed and professionally run campaigns to silence and/or destroy them and their careers.

We recognize that much of the free speech that occurs in academic and other environments will

offend some individuals and groups. However, as has been said many times before, the answer to free speech that some may find objectionable is more free speech, not less. We therefore call upon all academic institutions, their faculty and students, as well as the public at large, to resist such bullying tactics and defend the free speech principles upon which they and all free societies and their institutions are founded.

Sign the petition [here](#)

MEDICAL CAMPAIGN NEWS

Palestinian ambulances and the Israeli military

Derek Summerfield

[Published in the Lancet Online January 26, 2019](#)

Palestinian ambulances and the Israeli military Richard Horton (Nov 3, 2018, p 1612)¹ cites Israeli informants as alleging that Palestinian ambulances carry explosives. In 2002, Physicians for Human Rights– Israel (PHRI)² concluded that Israel had only ever provided evidence for one such case, when, in that year, a suicide belt had reportedly been found in an ambulance. But even this case was assessed by Amnesty International³ as suspicious: “The ambulance passed through four checkpoints on the way to Jerusalem without being searched (which is abnormal) and was then delayed for more than an hour before being searched to allow TV cameras to arrive (which suggests that the Israel Defence Forces [IDF] had, at the least, prior knowledge of something hidden there)”.

On the other hand, misuses of Palestinian ambulances by Israel have been well documented. In 2003, B’Tselem and PHRI⁴ wrote: “The IDF’s use of ambulances for military purposes is especially disturbing in light of repeated claims made by the IDF that Palestinians use ambulances to transport weapons and explosives... with the exception of one case, and despite repeated requests by Physicians for Human Rights and the International Red Cross, the IDF has not presented any evidence to support this contention, not even in response to petitions filed in the

Supreme Court". This has remained true over the years since.

Yet the allegation about Palestinian ambulances continues to be recycled and arguably serves above all as useful cover for the multiply documented shooting or rocketing of Palestinian ambulances on active duty—a violation of the fourth Geneva Convention—for many years, and the killing of the drivers, medical staff, and injured patients inside.

1 Horton R. Offline: The health of Palestinians is a global responsibility. *Lancet* 2018; 392: 1612.

2 Physicians for Human Rights–Israel. A legacy of injustice - a critique of Israeli approaches to the right to health. November, 2002. <https://www.scribd.com/document/41542555/Physiciansfor-Human-Rights-Israel-A-Legacy-of-Injustice-A-Critique-of-Israeli-Approaches-to-the-Right-to-Health-November-2002> (accessed Dec 20, 2018).

3 Amnesty International. Shielded from scrutiny. IDF violations in Jenin and Nablus. Nov 4, 2002. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE15/143/2002/en/> (accessed Dec 20, 2018).

4 B'Tselem - The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Physicians for Human Rights–Israel. Harm to medical personnel. The delay, abuse, humiliation of medical personnel by Israeli security forces. December, 2003. <https://www.scribd.com/document/41541546/Physicians-for-HumanRights-Israel-Harm-to-Medical-PersonnelDecember-2003> (accessed Dec 20, 2018)

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Dr Mads Gilbert and Colleagues : analysis of the traumatic amputations in Gaza

**Two articles from Dr Mads Gilbert and
Colleagues on amputations in Gaza**

1. *Life after conflict-related amputation trauma: a clinical study from the Gaza Strip.*

***Hanne Edøy Heszlein-Lossius, Yahya Al-Borno
, Samar Shaqqoura, Nashwa Skaik, Lasse
Melvaer Giil and Mads Gilbert***

[BMC Health and Human Rights \(2018\)](#)

Background: More than 17.000 Palestinians were injured during different Israeli military incursions on the Gaza Strip from 2006 to 2014. Many suffered traumatic extremity amputations. We describe the injuries, complications, living conditions and health among a selection of traumatic amputees in the Gaza Strip.

Conclusions: The most frequently observed amputees in our study were young, well-educated male breadwinners and almost one in five were children. Conflict-related traumatic amputations have wide-ranging, serious consequences for the amputees and their families. **Keywords:** Amputees, Gaza, Israel, Military incursion, Modern warfare, Palestine, Trauma

2. *Traumatic amputations caused by drone attacks in the local population in Gaza: a retrospective cross sectional study*

***Hanne Heszlein-Lossius MD, Yahya Al-Borno
MD, Samar Shaqqoura MD, Nashwa Skaik MD,
Lasse Melvaer Giil MD and Mads F GilbertMD***

[The Lancet Planetary Health, Volume 3, Issue 1,
January 2019.](#)

Background. Little data exist to describe the use and medical consequences of drone strikes on civilian populations in war and conflict zones. Gaza is a landstrip within the Palestinian territories and the home of 2 million people. The median age in Gaza is 17.2 years and almost half of the population is below the age of 14 years. We studied the prevalence and severity of [extremity amputation](#) injuries caused by drone strikes compared with those caused by other explosive weapons among patients with amputations attending the main physical prosthesis and [rehabilitation centre](#) in Gaza.

Interpretation. Drone strikes were the most commonly reported cause of amputation injury in our [study population](#) and were associated with more severe injuries and more additional surgeries than injuries caused by other explosive weapons. Limitations of our study include the self-reported nature of the mechanism of injury and number of

subsequent surgeries and selection bias from not incorporating amputation injuries from individuals who died immediately or due to complications. The increasing use of drones needs to be addressed, rather than passively accepted, by the international community. This study fills a gap in our knowledge of the civilian consequences of modern warfare and we believe it is also relevant to the growing populations that are being exposed to drone warfare and for health-care personnel treating these people.

Children’s hospitals in Gaza forced to close through lack of fuel

Editor

On January 20th 2019, we received this appeal from the [New Weapons Research Group](#) in Italy via [ECCP](#) - of which BRICUP is a member.

*We have received a desperate appeal from a doctor in Gaza, asking to make known to the world that, due to the blocking of funds already allocated by Qatar for the refuelling of the hospitals in Gaza, many health facilities are closing because of the inability to operate the generators that provide electricity for the operation of the care equipment. You can read about the current situation [this article](#). Please do what you can to make this latest emergency known to the public and to those **who can put pressure on the international community, and through it on Israel.***

More information

Ashraf al-Qedra , a spokesperson for Gaza's health ministry, has warned of a "*catastrophic situation*" as hospitals, including ones for children, are forced to close down due to a lack of fuel. "*Hundreds of patients at Gaza hospitals will be facing an unknown fate when their electric generators shut down due to the fuel crisis, The coming hours are crucial at Al-Nasr Hospital for Children, Al-Rantisi hospital for Children, Ophthalmology and Psychiatry and Abu Yusif Al Najjar Hospital. Patients in Gaza are crying for their unknown fate.*"

The ministry had announced on Thursday that the Beit Hanoun hospital, in the besieged strip's north, had already stopped providing services due to a lack of fuel needed to operate generators.

Qatar grant blocked: In 2017, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas pulled the plug on Palestinian Authority (PA) funds for fuel in the Gaza Strip, part of a number of moves to squeeze Hamas, the PA's rival movement which governs Gaza. Hamas and Abbas's Fatah party, which dominates the PA in the occupied West Bank, have been at odds since 2007, when the movement took control of the coastal enclave.

Soon after Israel imposed a crippling siege on Gaza, which combined with several Israeli offensives and the PA-Hamas breakdown has devastated Gaza's infrastructure and living conditions.

With Abbas’s fuel embargo, the electricity supply is about 50 percent of what it should be. Gaza's health ministry has kept its generators running through international donations, but now those funds are coming to an end. A Qatari grant has helped keep the only power plant in Gaza active, reducing the number of hours hospitals need to rely on generators. However, Israel has now refused the entry of Qatari money into the Gaza Strip for a second week in a row.

NEWS FROM OTHER CAMPAIGNS

[Campaign for the right to enter the occupied Palestinian territory - RTE](#)

RTE is grassroots campaign which protects the Palestinian right to education by defending rights of access, movement and residency in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territory. They are a volunteer group of individuals and families affected by the current Israeli occupation authorities’ policy that denies entry to foreign passport holders to the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) via the Israeli unilaterally controlled international border crossings to the oPt.

The Problem

Israel has recently intensified its practices regarding restriction of entry or re-entry to the oPt

with respect to residents of and visitors to the OPT (Gaza Strip and West Bank) who do not hold a Palestinian ID issued by the Israeli Ministry of Interior. A Palestinian ID is a personal identification document issued by Israel for Palestinian residents and their children.

Israel is now systematically denying entry or return to the oPt via the international Israeli borders at Ben Gurion Airport, Allenby Bridge, Sheikh Hussein Bridge, and Eilat. Most of those affected are Palestinian natives, spouses, children, parents and other close relatives of Palestinian ID holders. The policy affects entire families or individual members of families, like the father or the mother of minor children. As a result, families are torn apart, jobs or businesses lost and personal property becomes inaccessible.

The practice applies to people with and without Palestinian or Arab origins, and to those with and without local family relations. In addition to families, effected groups include professionals and academics who are in the oPt for teaching, research, the arts, business, visiting or volunteering their services. Most of these individuals have never overstayed their visitor's visas or breached any visiting regulations. It must be noted that Israel has reserved for itself the exclusive power of civil registration and issuing IDs for Palestinians, visitors' visas and work permits for non-ID holders to the oPt. By these means it is conducting a swift and effective 'silent transfer' of the Palestinians while the latter is living at the mercy of the Israeli occupation authorities. In addition to the people already locked out, there are many more still in the oPt and at risk of deportation or re-entry denial once they exit the country's international borders to comply with Israeli visa regulations.

Objectives of RTE

- Contact those still in the country and at risk of being denied re-entry, to advise them what options may be available to them, and to share experience about ways of proactive legal action;
- Collect information and document cases of entry and re-entry denial;
- Call on the national and international community to protest and take action against this Israeli practice of family

separation and denying entry to foreign experts and supporters;

- Launch an international legal and political campaign to prevent, stop and reverse these Israeli policies and practices;
- Urge consulates and embassies of affected citizens to formally protest, protect and take action against these Israeli practices;
- Publicize the issue and disseminate information through national and international media channels.

Contact the campaign by email at righttoenter@gmail.com.

See [this article](#) in the December issue of our newsletter for information about how seriously these policies are impacting on academic life at Birzeit University.

Scientists for Palestine

Scientists for Palestine is an international organisation created by and for scientists to promote science and support the integration of the occupied Palestinian territories in the international scientific community. It aims to meet the increased international interest in supporting and engaging with the Palestinian scientific community. We intend to organise a range of activities in the future, and we welcome scientists wanting to become involved

If you are a scientist and interested in learning more about our activities or becoming involved in future projects, please fill out this [form](#)

We are also on [Facebook](#):



Mental Health Study Delegation to Palestine, October 22-31, 2019,

The UK and USA Palestine Mental Health Networks present a unique opportunity to learn about

- The mental health impact of occupation on everyday life
- Trauma within families and how it affects women, men and children
- Violence against children, including imprisonment and inter-generational trauma
- Perspectives on the mental health crisis from Palestinian and Israeli professional colleagues

The tour is facilitated by a small UK company with nearly twenty years' experience providing alternative tours to the Occupied Palestine Territory (OPT) and Israel. Hotels will be located in Bethlehem and Nazareth with daily travel to Jerusalem, Hebron, Ramallah, Nablus, Jaffa/Tel Aviv, and Haifa. Travel will be in a private comfortable coach with an expert local driver from a licensed bus company.

"The Tour provided a superb mix of in-depth encounters with mental health practitioners and overviews of the political and social conditions within which mental health services operate—without which it would have been impossible to understand their dilemmas, struggles and triumphs."
G. Daniel, Spring 2016

Space is limited, so don't delay. Send request for application to: ukpalmhn@gmail.com

UK Palestine Mental Health Network
19, High Street
Deal, Kent, CT14 7AA

Belgian Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israel (BACBI)

See their January newsletter (N°38) [here](#).

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>

Sign the commitment by UK Scholars to human rights in Palestine

This commitment, which has been signed by over 700 academics across UK's higher education system, is not to accept invitations for academic visits to Israel, not to act as referees in activities related to Israel academic institutions, or cooperate in any other way with Israeli universities.

It is a response to the appeal for such action by Palestinian academics and civil society due to the deep complicity of Israeli academic institutions in Israeli violations of international law. Signatories have pledged to continue their commitment until Israel complies with international law, and respects Palestinian human rights.

For more information, and to sign, go to <http://www.commitment4p.com>

NOTICES

Speakers: We are 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 standing 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 making a bank transfer to BRICUP at

Sort Code 08-92-99

Account Number 65156591

IBAN = GB20 CPBK 0892 9965 1565 91

BIC = CPBK GB22

If you use the direct funds transfer mechanism, please confirm the transaction by sending an explanatory email to treasurer@bricup.org.uk