

BRICUP Newsletter 131

BRICUP

British Committee for the
Universities of Palestine

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Trump administration denies entry to the co-founder of the BDS movement

For a full report, see [this article](#) by *Ali Abuminah* in the Electronic Intifada

On April 10th, [Omar Barghouti](#) was denied entry into the United States when he arrived at Ben Gurion Airport despite having valid travel documents. Barghouti was not provided an explanation for his denial of entry beyond it being an ‘immigration matter’.

Omar’s planned visit was to take part in a number of speaking engagements and educational programs at the invitation of the Arab American Institute in Washington. Omar described the decision to deny him entry as being ‘*ideologically and politically motivated*’ and as ‘*part of Israel’s escalating repression against Palestinian, Israeli and international human rights defenders.*’

PEN America, a group that defends the freedom of expression of writers and artists, [said](#) that if Barghouti was excluded from the US on ‘*ideological grounds,*’ that this would be ‘*a violation of his free expression rights, as well as an infringement on academic freedom and the rights of those who have planned to attend several public events in the US in the coming days to hear him speak.*’

Despite the Trump administration’s ban, the speaking event did go forward, and is a recording is available here and is available [here](#).

Collective statement from international academic and cultural boycott organizations

The following is a [collective statement](#) has been released by BRICUP together with other international academic and cultural boycott of Israel (ACBI) organizations in response to the United States’ denial of entry to Omar Barghouti

The United States, a country where freedom of speech is supposedly guaranteed by the constitution, has [banned](#) Omar Barghouti from entering to fulfil a [speaking tour](#).

Omar Barghouti is the highly-respected co-founder of the Palestinian-led, global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions ([BDS](#)) Movement for Palestinian rights. The BDS movement itself grew out of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel ([PACBI](#)) initiative

that Omar Barghouti had co-founded in 2004 with prominent Palestinian academics and cultural figures.

Our BDS organisations offer a means for the world to engage with Palestinians in a global non-violent resistance movement against Israeli settler colonialism, apartheid and occupation. Israel’s apartheid regime is fighting unscrupulously against BDS and its most effective spokesperson.

In Trump’s America Israel has a truly fitting partner. We call on supporters of the rights of Palestinians everywhere to protest this outrageous and unjustified attack on freedom of speech and of pro-Palestinian advocacy. The most effective way to do so is through intensified BDS campaigns to hold Israel to account.

signed

Academics for Palestine (AfP, Ireland)
Association des Universitaires pour le Respect du Droit International en Palestine (AURDIP)
BDS Académico en Argentina
Belgian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (BACBI)
British Committee for the Universities of Palestine (BRICUP)
Faculty for Palestine (F4P, Canada)
Indian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (InCACBI)
Moroccan Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (MACBI)
Norwegian Committee for Academic and Cultural Boycott of the state of Israel (AKULBI)
Sydney University Staff for BDS
Tunisian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (TACBI)
US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI)

I co-founded the BDS movement. Why was I denied entry to the US?

Omar Barghout

See Guardian article [here](#)

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Nazifying the Arabs: the war of Holocaust narratives

Les Levidow, Jewish Network for Palestine (JNP)

Since the Nazi Holocaust there has been a war of narratives about its anti-racist meaning.

According to the prevalent Zionist narrative, the Arab world has been driven by a racist, neo-Nazi hatred of all Jews and even collaborated with the Nazis against the Jews living there. In this narrative, Arab leaders were regarded as an enemy of Israel – from Egypt’s Gamal Abdel-Nasser to the PLO’s Yasser Arafat to Iraq’s Saddam Hussein – and have been labelled as Nazis seeking to murder Jews.

The dominant narrative was critically analysed by the 2010 book, [The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives](#), by Gilbert Achcar, Professor of International Relations at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). As his book demonstrated, antisemitism in the Arab world has been historically weaker than analogous racist agendas in the West and has been imported from there. Nevertheless continuous Zionist colonisation has pleaded self-defence against a Nazi-like Arab threat of extermination, thus nazifying the Arabs. Such claims have provoked a ‘war of narratives’ about the role of antisemitism in anti-Zionism and Zionism alike. This war of narratives was discussed at an event at SOAS on April 26th, which was co-sponsored by its Palestine Society and the Jewish Network for Palestine (JNP). Rather than give a lecture, the author was interviewed by Professor Haim Bresheeth, author of [Introducing the Holocaust](#). He stressed today’s relevance of a book discussing issues that have become hotter than at the time of publication, reading ‘*as if it had come out yesterday*’, (Haim Bresheeth).

As Professor Achcar explained, Jews historically have seen relatively greater safety in Muslim lands, given their experience of Christian persecution in Europe. In the 15th century the Christian reconquest of Portugal and Spain led to

forced conversion. After the 1492 expulsion of Jews and Muslims, tens of thousands of Jews fled to Muslim North Africa and the Ottoman Empire; they were welcomed, finding refuge there for centuries.

Serious tensions between Jewish and Muslim communities arose only after the First World War, when the Balfour Declaration offered the Zionist Federation a Jewish homeland in Palestine. During the Second World War, nationalist groups in various places saw Hitler as an ally against British imperialism; such nationalists included the Indian National Alliance, the (Revisionist Zionist) Stern Gang and some Palestinian leaders. This misguided strategy was supporting ‘the enemy of my enemy’, rather than coming from antisemitic motives. And during the Nazi Occupation of North Africa, Muslims protected Jews from persecution, while also opposing the Zionist colonization project.

Since the Holocaust, the accusation of ‘Arab antisemitism’ (alongside the Holocaust itself) has been deployed as an extra means to justify establishment of a Jewish state and then further colonisation. This deployment led some Arabs to espouse Holocaust denial, an ideology which they adopted from Western antisemites.

Far more salient than antisemitism among Arabs during the Nazi period, they provided hospitality and protection for Jews against antisemitism. Examples include Iraqi Arabs protecting Jews during the ‘Farhud’ in 1941, the only significant pogrom in the Arab world, where more Arab Muslims were killed by the British forces suppressing the attacks than the number of Jews who died.

Despite the 1941 Farhud, the new Israeli state initially failed to attract immigration from Iraqi Jews; they were the oldest Jewish community anywhere, lasting almost 3000 years. Israel’s Mossad resorted to planting bombs in Baghdad synagogues with fake messages that these were the acts of Muslim antisemites (codenamed Operation Babylon). The bombings finally pushed the Iraqi Jews to emigrate to Israel.

Nevertheless Israel has demanded ‘reparations’ for the supposed persecution which led Jews to leave Arab countries. This demand has served to neutralise Palestinian demands for the return of the refugees. And Israel instrumentalised the 1962 Adolf Eichmann trial for a political agenda, labelling the Arabs as Nazis, especially President Gamal Abd-Al Nasser.

By contrast, as Professor Achcar pointed out, long-time Zionist collusion with antisemites has strong evidence. In 1933 the German Zionist Federation signed the Transfer Agreement with Nazi Germany, allowing Jews to emigrate to Palestine with their wealth, in return for sabotaging the global boycott of the Nazi regime. More recently, antisemitic views have been most apparent amongst Arab leaders with whom the Israelis have chosen to partner, e.g. the late Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Abu Mazen, current leader of the PLO.

Today the strongest support for Israel's colonisation project comes from antisemitic politicians in Europe. Zionist organisations welcome such support, and Israel hosts their visits to its Holocaust museum (Yad Vashem), thus sanitising their antisemitic politics. For more examples of Zionist-antisemitic partnerships, see this [briefing document](#).

Professor Achar pointed out that, despite such collusion with antisemitism, the Zionist narrative has found popular resonance by exploiting Western guilt around the Holocaust- perhaps by also projecting their own neocolonial anti-Arab (or Islamophobic) racism onto Arabs, and especially the Palestinians and regimes supporting them. While most Arab regimes have been brought to toe Washington's line, Iran remains the strongest opponent of Israel's aggression in the Middle East. The Zionist narrative therefore has been nazifying Iran in particular.

The war of narratives matters for wider anti-racist struggles today. The Zionist agenda monopolises the Holocaust with the slogan, '*Never Again to us*', while branding pro-Palestinian campaigns as antisemites. By contrast, the anti-racist agenda proclaims, '*Never Again to anyone*'.

The JNP-PalSoc lecture series will continue on a regular basis; see our [Facebook](#) page for future events.

Texas judge blocks law designed to counter Israel boycott on grounds, citing free speech

Texas is among 25 states that has enacted bans on participation in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement

A federal judge has blocked enforcement of a Texas law that requires contractors to certify that they don't support a boycott of Is In a 56 page

opinion filed Thursday, US District Judge Robert Pitman of Austin said boycotts are protected free speech, declaring the law fails to serve a compelling state interest.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Texas filed the federal suit in December against Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and others. It argued the law forces people to choose between their First Amendment rights and their livelihoods. The lawsuit was a consolidation of two court actions. One was brought last December by the Council on American-Islamic Relations on behalf of [Bahia Amawi](#), a Palestinian Muslim speech pathologist and US citizen who lost her job with a suburban Austin school district because she refused to sign a "No Boycott of Israel" clause mandated by the state.

Read more [here](#)

UNIVERSITY NEWS

Dublin university students vote to back boycott of Israel

Editor

Students at Dublin City University (DCU) have [voted](#) by 1,400 votes to 300 to align their students' union with the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement As a result, the DCU students' union now has the authority to "campaign on issues related to Palestine, and lobby DCU to end ties with Israeli companies and institutions".

The [referendum](#) had previously been held in March but, after a technical error which forced an early closure of the voting, officials cancelled the result and ordered a repeat vote. Prior to the results Stephanie O'Toole, the chairperson of [DCU Students for Justice in Palestine](#) (SJP), a pro-Palestinian student activist organization, commented that 'we want our Students' Union to take steps to implement the demands of the Palestinian call for BDS. But we also want to build a culture of solidarity with Palestine on campus and reach as many students as we can through means of education.'

Last year, students at Trinity College Dublin voted in a referendum on whether their Students' Union (TCDSU) should support the BDS movement. 64.5% of students voted in support of

TCDSU affiliating with BDS, with 2,050 students voting in the referendum.

Pitzer College Council vote to suspend study programme with the University of Haifa

Following on from our [report](#) on this in the March issue, **the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI)** have issued the following statement

From the USACBI Organizing Collective

USACBI stands firmly with the students and faculty at Pitzer College who voted overwhelmingly to suspend Pitzer's study abroad program with the University of Haifa "until (a) the Israeli state ends its restrictions on entry to Israel based on ancestry and/or political speech and (b) the Israeli state adopts policies granting visas for exchanges to Palestinian universities on a fully equal basis as it does to Israeli universities." We further support their demand for their President, Melvin Oliver, to "rescind or resign" in response to his veto of their motion, which was born from a thorough and thoughtful democratic process of deliberation.

The President's veto—which flagrantly violates Pitzer's commitments to shared governance and democratic processes—has happened only once before, in response to an initiative to support Palestinian Rights and work through non-violent means to attain a just peace for all.

The Pitzer faculty's motion to suspend their Study Abroad program goes hand in hand with the College's stated principles of practicing non-discrimination. Study Abroad programs in Israel violate the rights of US faculty and students and campus non-discrimination and equal opportunity policies. Some US students, faculty, and staff traveling to Israel for such programs risk discrimination and harassment based on protected categories such as religion and national origin. It is well-known that Israel routinely denies entry to persons of Arab, Middle Eastern, or Muslim origin and subjects them to detention and harassment at borders, engaging unashamedly in racial profiling and effectively declaring such travelers suspect in advance. This has been confirmed by numerous individual travelers as well as the U.S. State Department, which openly observes that "U.S. citizens whom Israeli authorities suspect of being of Arab, Middle Eastern, or Muslim origin... may face additional,

often time-consuming, and probing questioning by immigration and border authorities, or may even be denied entry into Israel, the West Bank, or Gaza." Moreover, a recent Israeli law (approved in March 2017) prohibits entry into Israel for anyone who has publicly supported the BDS movement.

In addition to documented discrimination against US citizens based on ethnicity and political speech, Israeli schools are separate and unequal for indigenous Palestinian citizens. Curtailing Palestinian education has been a Zionist imperative according to recently [declassified](#) documents stating, "The formation of a broad educated class must be averted as far as possible."

The President's actions are in violation of basic collegiate principles of non-discrimination. His veto is not only anti-democratic, it also reinforces the view that the only initiatives opposed by his office are ones that support Palestinian rights. The status quo in Occupied Palestine, represented by an Israeli university which conforms to and is funded by the apartheid policies of the Israeli government has been clearly seen and understood for what it is - and the democratic vote of the College Council, representing a community majority at Pitzer College, must be upheld.

Pitzer's motion to suspend their study abroad program is consistent with the principles promoted by USACBI's Study Abroad in Israel boycott campaign, which includes a [pledge](#) taken by faculty across the United States to uphold the academic boycott of Israel by refusing participation in Study Abroad programs in Israel. USACBI has called for this [national campaign](#) to boycott Study Abroad in Israel programs until Israel respects the rights of Palestinians under international law, including the right to education.

We commend the Pitzer students and faculty who have acted in principled support for a right to education free of discrimination, and we join them in urging Pitzer's president either to rescind his undemocratic veto, or else to resign from his position.

Stand with Pitzer faculty and students to [#SuspendPitzerHaifa](#)

See this [petition](#): '[We Demand President Oliver Honor Shared Governance](#)'

University of Capetown's Senate vote in favour of an academic boycott of Israel

Statement by the South African Union of Students (SAUS)

22 March 2019

The South African Union of Students (SAUS), representing all student representative bodies in South Africa, welcomes the decision taken by the University of Cape Town's (UCT) Senate "in favour of a proposal for UCT to not enter into any formal relationships with Israeli academic institutions operating in the occupied Palestinian territories as well as other Israeli academic institutions enabling gross human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territories." The decision was passed in the Senate with 62 in favor, 43 against and 10 abstentions.

UCT joins other universities, academic bodies and student governments the world over who are adopting measures in support of the academic boycott of Israel. In 2011 the University of Johannesburg (UJ) terminated relations with Israel's Ben Gurion University and in 2017 Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) adopted the academic boycott of Israel. In 2014 the Minister of Higher Education called on all institutions of higher to adopt an academic boycott of Israel.

The academic boycott is well supported among South African academics - in 2011 a petition in support of the academic boycott gained unprecedented support of over 400 South African academics, including 9 South African Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors; 11 Deans and Vice Deans; 19 Heads of Department; 175 University Professors and 125 Academic Doctorates. Included in the list of supporters were some of South Africa's leading voices and anti-apartheid stalwarts: Professors Neville Alexander, Kader Asmal, Allan Boesak, Breyten Breytenbach, John Dugard, Antjie Krog, Rashida Manjoo, Barney Pityana and Sampie Terreblanche.

In 2016 several academics pulled out of a Genocide Conference that was being hosted in Israel - among those who withdrew, to the embarrassment of the Israeli organizers, included the Vice President of the International Network of Genocide Scholars (INoGS) who hails from South Africa. Last year, following an outcry from South African civil society, seven Israelis withdrew

from an academic conference at Stellenbosch University.

The BDS movement also has active backing of students with South Africa's largest student formation, SASCO, as well as the SAUS and other organizations at institutions of higher learning having adopted the boycott of Israel and active participation in Palestine solidarity activities.

The Israeli lobby has been caught flat-footed using two baseless and tired arguments against UCT. They are suggesting that, due to this principled stance of UCT, the institution will drop in international standing and loose funding.

Firstly, following UJ's adoption of the academic boycott, between 2011 and today, UJ has advanced to the top 2.3% of universities globally and has moved into fifth position nationally. UJ has climbed an astounding 60 places, breaking into the top 500 in the world, in between 2011 and today. In TUT's case, following the decision to boycott Israel, TUT was ranked for the first time among the top 1000 universities globally, and has further been ranked #9 among the top 10 universities in South Africa. It also remains the number one university of technology in Africa.

Secondly, in terms of funding, UJ has steadily increased (not decreased) its funding since its stance in support of the Palestinian boycott of Israel. For example, just three years ago UJ ran one of the biggest fundraising campaigns ever undertaken by a South African institution of higher learning and raised close to R90 million for students.

SAUS commends the students, academics, activists of the UCT PSF and all others who have for the last two years worked tirelessly on this campaign at the University of Cape Town. Indeed, international solidarity once assisted us in our liberation and so we have an obligation to stand with those who stood with us like the Palestinians, Cuban and all oppressed peoples.

Published by South African Union of Students (SAUS)

Thabo Shingange, SAUS National Spokesperson

Lwandile Mtsolo, Secretary General of SAUS

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NEWS FROM OTHER CAMPAIGNS

No academic business with Ariel University - a new campaign for the non- recognition of Ariel University

From their [website](#)

Ariel University is the most prominent of several Israeli institutions of higher education built in illegal Israeli colony-settlements on Palestinian land in the West Bank

It is an illegal institution, and is deeply and directly complicit in Israel's system of oppression that has denied Palestinians their basic rights guaranteed by international law, including the right to education and academic freedom.

Authoritative Palestinian academic bodies are [calling](#) on states, academic institutions, multilateral research bodies and international academics not to recognize Ariel University and to refrain from any institutional relations with it.

Who launched the call?

Palestinian Ministry of Education

Council of Palestinian Universities' Presidents

Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees (PFUPE)

Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council (PHROC)

What you can do:

Urge states and institutions to avoid being complicit in illegality, by:

(1) Refraining from accrediting or recognising any diplomas or qualifications conferred by Ariel University;

(2) Ending all links and agreements with the Israeli Council for Higher Education as long as it continues to accredit Ariel University.

International academics are called upon to:

(3) Decline to write or referee for journals published by Ariel or based in it;

(4) Refuse to participate in projects or attend conferences fully or partially sponsored by Ariel University or which include its representatives (dean, head of department or spokesperson) as participants;

(5) Urge universities, conferences and workshops not to host individual academics from Ariel University unless their affiliation properly

indicates Ariel University as being built in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in violation of international law;

(6) Urge academic journals not to publish material identified with Ariel University unless properly indicated as being built in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in violation of international law;

(7) Advocate for academic societies to approve motions supporting the call from Palestinian academic bodies not to recognise/sever existing links with Ariel University;

(8) Reject any collaboration with Ariel University as an institution or with any of its bodies.

Italian Society for Middle East Studies (SeSaMO) joins the campaign

Letter to the Minister of Education

Minister Marco Bussetti

Ministry of Education, University and Research

Catania, March 14, 2019

Mr. Minister,

I am writing as the President of the Society for Middle Eastern Studies (SeSaMO) regarding the inclusion of Ariel University among institutions accredited by Israel's Council for Higher Education. The Society for Middle Eastern Studies, a network of scholars of North African and Middle Eastern studies active in Italy since 1995, expresses serious concern over the so-called Ariel University Law enacted in 2018 by the Israeli parliament (Knesset), which extends legal authority of the State of Israel to higher education institutions built beyond the Green Line.

The University of Ariel, like the settlement in which it is located, is situated in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in open violation of international law. In fact, the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits the transfer of civilian populations and the construction of settlements within militarily occupied territories. In 1998 the International Criminal Court defined such acts as "war crimes" in its statute. Two hundred Israeli academics expressed their dissent in a letter published in the newspaper Haaretz as early as December 2017.

In light of the above, SeSaMO invites you to evaluate the possibility of not accrediting - through the acceptance of degrees, framework agreements or inter-university collaborations - Ariel University and other Israeli academic

institutions illegally located in the Palestinian Territories. Such a decision, which is not equivalent to a position in favor of boycott campaigns against Israel and Israeli universities, would be consistent with the policy of the Italian government and the European Union not to recognize Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Territories.

The transfer of Ariel University under the aegis of the Council for Higher Education also raises some critical issues regarding the relations the Ministry has with its Israeli counterpart. Any form of interstate cooperation, essential in the field of training and research, cannot be separated from compliance with international law.

Confident that you will give your attention to the issues raised by our scientific community, I send you my most cordial greetings.

Prof. Daniela Melfa
President, SeSaMO

Academia for Equality- opposing policies of war, domination and military occupation

[Academia for Equality](#) (AfE) is a members' organization founded in 2015 with about 500 hundred active members and supporters based in Israel and in academic institutions all over the world. AfE is dedicated to principles of equality, inclusion, and democratization and to the values of an inclusive and accessible public education. AfE opposes policies of war, domination and military occupation in general and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in particular. We stand in solidarity with the struggle for academic freedom of Palestinian academics and address the complicity of Israeli academia with the occupation. AfE is critical of the dominant academic culture and of neo-liberal academic policies and wishes to form broad alliances to advance democratization and accountability and eradicate all forms of discrimination within Israeli academia and in society at large.

In our March issue we included details of a report in Haaretz, on March 24th, about the Israeli army's latest request for bids to host its elite academic programme (Havatzalot) for future intelligence officers. According to some university officials , this would include a number of conditions that would “*undermine the academic fabric and the privacy of students and faculty*”. In response, Academics for Equality have issued an appeal in the following open letter

To Whom It May Concern

We are writing on a matter concerning an attack on the principle of academic freedom in Israel. Israeli academia's institutional collusion and complicity with the Israeli Defense Forces is a well-known and well-documented fact. For decades Israeli academia has been hosting special programs of the IDF and the state security apparatuses enjoy immense influence, dictating the terms of their contracts with academia, demanding preference and better conditions of study for soldiers, and intervening in academic content in clear violation of the principle of academic autonomy and equality in access to higher education.

We are a member's organization dedicated to the democratizations of Israeli academia and society, and one of our projects consists of documenting and monitoring through our “Complicit Academy” [database](#), inter alia, such instances of militarization of the academic space, and similar disruptions of normal academic life.

In recent weeks we learned that the Hebrew University of Jerusalem won a tender to host the IDF Havatzalot training program for intelligence officers, due to start in October 2019. Based on information from [public sources](#), it appears that the terms of this contract go beyond any “normal” level of complicity. The implications are severe:

- The IDF plans to establish a highly secured military installation on campus with a standby armed force deploying surveillance technologies that potentially can indiscriminately affect everyone on campus.
- The IDF demands the personal details of all university employees related to the program.
- The IDF demands preferential treatment to hundreds of uniformed and armed soldiers that will flood regular departments of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, Political Science, Philosophy, and others. The preferential treatment includes a commitment from the university that only the most high-ranking tenured lecturers will be allocated to its program, effectively discriminating against civilian students.
- IDF demands authority for commanders of the programs to intervene in matters concerning the academic performance of its soldiers. From experience at Haifa University, we know of cases in which a high-ranking officer managing this program regularly attended classes, informally monitoring and thus severely affecting the content being discussed there.

- It goes without saying that such a militarized environment will deeply affect the already marginalized and oppressed population of Palestinian students in campus.

All the demands of the IDF are evidently accepted by The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who seems to downplay in its communications the way the plan permanently damages the most basic principles of autonomy of an academic institution and its functioning as a civilian institution. Yet, Academia for Equality believes that if the plan is executed and becomes a normalized reality this should have severe implication on The Hebrew University of Jerusalem's international standing and on the entire higher education system in Israel.

We therefore urge any intervention you may wish to consider in this case including:

- Sending an official letter to the Hebrew University authorities:
Prof. Asher Cohen, President,
hupres@savion.huji.ac.il
Prof. Barak Medina, Rector,
rector@savion.huji.ac.il
- Putting on hold any "business as usual" communications with Hebrew University authorities.
- Considering the standing of current as well as planned professional cooperation and exchange in light of this development.

We are hopeful that raising public concern for the principle of academic freedom in Israel could aid in convincing The Hebrew University of Jerusalem to drop a plan that endangers academic life, harms the relationship between lecturers and students, compromises their privacy and last but not least sabotages the delicate social fabric on campus.

Sincerely,
Academia for Equality
Executive Board

See [here](#) for more information about Academia for Equality, who will shortly be launching their own trilingual (Hebrew, Arabic, English) website

Cultural Boycott: UK cinemas should boycott the Israeli film festival [Seret](#)

See [Guardian letter](#) on April 25th , signed by 20 British filmmakers and writers including Mike Leigh, Leila Sansour, Ken Loach and Prahitbha Parmar. The letter cites the findings of the recent

UN report on Israel's violence against Palestinians in Gaza.

Text of the letter

We're shocked and dismayed to see how many mainstream cinemas – among them Picturehouse and Everyman – are hosting this year's Israeli film festival, Seret, whose funders and supporters include the Israeli government and a clutch of pro-Israel advocacy organisations. Two months ago, a commission set up by the [UN human rights council concluded](#) that the actions of Israeli soldiers against Palestinian participants in the Great March of Return in Gaza may constitute "war crimes or crimes against humanity". "Particularly alarming," said a member of the commission, was "the targeting of children and persons with disabilities."

This UN report is the latest in 70 years of reports of mass expulsions, killings, house demolitions, detention without trial, torture, military occupation and military onslaught against the indigenous population, the Palestinians. But none of this appears to disturb the cinemas involved in the festival. One is even housing a [fundraising screening](#) for [an organisation](#) that sponsors non-Israelis to join the Israeli army.

By comparison, we note the instant resort to boycott by people outraged by Brunei's legislating to have LGBT people and alleged adulterers stoned to death ([Celebrities boycott Brunei-owned hotels over country's new anti-LGBT laws](#), 4 April; [Sultan of Brunei, who passed anti-LGBT laws, owns slew of luxury UK properties](#), 15 April). We're outraged too. But if George Clooney, Elton John and a host of others can instantly embrace a boycott to put pressure on Brunei, what is stopping programmers at Picturehouse and elsewhere doing the same in relation to Israel?

We cannot understand why cultural institutions continue to behave as if [Israel](#) is an ordinary democracy. It is not. Palestinians deserve better than this. UK cinemas should not be hosting Seret.

Association of Academics for the Respect of International Law in Palestine ([AURDIP](#)),

Read their latest newsletter [here](#)

Belgian Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israel (BACBI)

Read their April newsletter [here](#)

Read their April Cultural newsletter [here](#)

US Campaign for the academic and Cultural of Israel (USACBI)

[USACBI letter](#) calls on scientists to reject settlement university conference, support academic boycott of Israel

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OTHER NEWS

Palestinian Childhoods : Human Rights, Mental Health and Resistance:

Conference held on 8/9 March 2019, co-organised by Birkbeck University and the UK-Palestine Mental Health Network

See the following links for more information

[Reflections on some themes of the conference](#) by Gwyn Daniel

[Audio recordings of the conference available on Podcast](#)

[Comment by Professor Lynne Segal](#)- Professor of Psychology and Gender Studies at Birkbeck College, London.

List of contributors: Professor Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Hebrew University; Dr Samar Jabr, Chair Mental Health Unit, Palestine; Riad Arrar, Defence of the Child International; Dr Marwan Diab, Gaza Community Mental Health Programme; Dr Ghada Karmi, Exeter University; Shahd Abusalama, Sheffield Hallam University; Reem Yaghi, and Meran Zahran, Childrens' Parliament, Palestine; Mohamed Altawil and David Harrold, Palestine Trauma Centre; Victoria Brittain, UK human rights activist; Lynne Segal, Birkbeck University; Jacqueline Rose, Birkbeck University. Also Professor Bruna Seu, Birkbeck University; and Mohammed Mukhaimer, Gwyn Daniel and Martin Kemp from the UK-Palestine Mental Health Network

See also this article in the Middle East Eye (March 29th) by Hind Khoudary in Gaza City

['A void no one can fill: Gaza's children face trauma of losing friends and family in protests.](#)

UK Palestine Mental Health Network

19 High St, Deal, Kent CT14 7AA

United Kingdom

Health Issues from the Jewish Voice for Peace in their [April Media Watch](#)

This monthly Media Watch is comprised of a list of important news from Palestine which includes a number of items related to health issues. This month, it includes

- UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on Gaza- Israeli soldiers intentionally shot children, journalists, the disabled and health workers who were clearly not a threat
- World Health Organisation (WHO): More than 97% of Gaza's water does not meet quality standards.
- Heavy metal contamination of the mothers in surveillance of births in Gaza, Palestine reveal long term impact of wars.
- Health of Palestinians ignored in debate at the Israel National Institute for Health Policy. A letter in The Lancet calls for relaxation of visa restrictions of medical personnel wanting to work in the OPT.

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 [here](#) 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.