

CALL

U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

Mission Statement:

Responding to the call of Palestinian civil society to join the Boycott, Divestment and Sanction movement against Israel, we are a U.S. campaign focused specifically on a boycott of Israeli academic and cultural institutions, as delineated by PACBI (Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel):

“In light of Israel's persistent violations of international law, and Given that, since 1948, hundreds of UN resolutions have condemned Israel's colonial and discriminatory policies as illegal and called for immediate, adequate and effective remedies, and Given that all forms of international intervention and peace-making have until now failed to convince or force Israel to comply with humanitarian law, to respect fundamental human rights and to end its occupation and oppression of the people of Palestine, and In view of the fact that people of conscience in the international community have historically shouldered the moral responsibility to fight injustice, as exemplified in the struggle to abolish apartheid in South Africa through diverse forms of boycott, divestment and sanctions;

Inspired by the struggle of South Africans against apartheid and in the spirit of international solidarity, moral consistency and resistance to injustice and oppression, We, representatives of Palestinian civil society, call upon international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era. We appeal to you to pressure your respective states to impose embargoes and sanctions against Israel. We also invite conscientious Israelis to support this Call, for the sake of justice and genuine peace.

These non-violent punitive measures should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.”

[For more information: http://www.pacbi.org/campaign_statement.htm]

PACBI and the entire movement for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (representing the overwhelming majority among Palestinian civil society parties, unions, networks and

organizations) emphasize fundamental Palestinian rights, sanctioned by international law and universal human rights principles, that ought to be respected by Israel to end the boycott. We struggle to achieve an end to Israel's three-tiered injustice and oppression: 1) occupation and colonization in the 1967-occupied Palestinian territory; 2) denial of the refugees' rights, paramount among which is their right to return to their homes of origin, as per UN General Assembly Resolution 194; and 3) the system of racial discrimination, or apartheid, to which Palestinian (all non-Jewish) citizens of Israel are subjected to.

The principles guiding the PACBI campaign and the three goals outlined above are also points of unity for the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USCACBI). We believe it is time to take a public, principled stance in support of equality, self-determination, human rights (including the right to education), and true democracy, especially in light of the censorship and silencing of the Palestine question in U.S. universities, as well as U.S. society at large. There can be no academic freedom in Israel/Palestine unless all academics are free and all students are free to pursue their academic desires.

If you are committed to these principles of unity, and wish to work on a campaign of boycotting academic and cultural institutions guided by this approach, please join our campaign.

Urgent Appeal:

Furthermore, we are also responding to the Open Letter to International Academic Institutions from the Right to Education campaign at Birzeit University in Palestine (January 17, 2009):

“In light of the ongoing massive Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip, in which over 1,200 people have been killed - over 1,000 (86%) of whom were civilian men, women and children - and where over 4,000 have been maimed and injured, the Right to Education Campaign at Birzeit University calls upon the international academic community, unions and students to show support and solidarity with the people of Gaza by calling upon their respective governments to impose immediate boycott, divestment and sanctions against the state of Israel until it abides by international human rights and humanitarian laws, dismantles its apartheid regime spanning both the occupied territories and Israel proper, and commits to pursuing a long-lasting, just peace. Enough is enough.”

[For more information: <http://right2edu.birzeit.edu/news/article706>]

If you wish to endorse this call for an academic and cultural boycott, please email us at: uscom4acbi@gmail.com. If you would be willing to indicate your support publicly, please let us know and send us your name and institutional affiliation.

For more information on actions suggested by the boycott campaign, see information and links at our website: <http://usacbi.wordpress.com/>

Press Release

DATE

U.S. Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israel
Joins International Calls
To Boycott Israeli Academic and Cultural Institutions

Contacts:

Who goes here?

In Israel's latest assault on Gaza, at least 1300 Palestinians have died, one third of them children, and 5300 been wounded. Israel has targeted civilians, using internationally-proscribed phosphorous bombs, deprived them of power, water and other means to life, and sought to destroy the infrastructure of Palestinian civil society, including hospitals, administrative buildings and UN facilities. It has targeted with peculiar consistency educational institutions of all kinds. Since December 27, Israel has deliberately bombed the Islamic University of Gaza, the Ministry of Education, the American International School, at least ten UNRWA schools, one of which was sheltering displaced Palestinian civilians, and tens of other schools and educational facilities. Each of these acts constitutes a breach of international law and a probable war crime. The unilateral ceasefire declared by Israel puts an end temporarily to the most brutal slaughter of civilians, but it inaugurates a new phase of occupation of Gaza. It is not a solution but a continuation by familiar means of the ongoing destruction of Palestinian culture and society.

This most recent Israeli onslaught against Palestinian academic institutions is not exceptional, but is part of Israel's deliberate destruction of Palestinian educational and archival institutions. Over the course of its 40-year long occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Israel has systematically deprived Palestinian children and youth of education, daily threatening their lives and restricting their access to schools and universities. Palestinians who live as second-class citizens in Israel face discrimination in educational and employment opportunities: the pattern of restricting the lives and futures of Palestinian youth holds within Israel as well as in the West Bank and Gaza. During the illegal siege of Gaza over the past year and a half, Israel began the destruction of the educational infrastructure that has been completed during the current war. These continual violations show no sign of diminishing and Israeli academic institutions and most Israeli academics have by their silence been complicit with these attacks.

Therefore, in response to the call by the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) and in response by the courageous call of more than 500 Israeli citizens to foreign embassies in Tel Aviv, we call for a U.S. boycott of Israeli academic and cultural institutions.

We believe that only non-violent external pressure on Israel, in the form of an academic, cultural and economic boycott of Israel, can help bring an end to the ongoing massacres of civilians and an end the occupation of Gaza and Palestine. We therefore urge a comprehensive boycott, including divestment, political sanctions, and the immediate halt to all military aid, sales and deliveries to Israel. However, as educators of conscience, we specifically call for an academic

and cultural boycott of Israeli institutions as a key element in this larger action.

In the midst of the current attack on Gaza, PACBI and the Association of University Teachers in Gaza reiterated their call for action, initially put forth in 2005:

“We, Palestinian academics and intellectuals, call upon our colleagues in the international community to comprehensively and consistently boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions as a contribution to the struggle to end Israel’s occupation, colonization and system of apartheid, by applying the following:

- *Refrain from participation in any form of academic and cultural cooperation, collaboration or joint projects with Israeli institutions;
- *Advocate a comprehensive boycott of Israeli institutions at the national and international levels, including suspension of all forms of funding and subsidies to these institutions;
- *Promote divestment and disinvestment from Israel by international academic institutions;
- *Work toward the condemnation of Israeli policies by pressing for resolutions to be adopted by academic, professional and cultural associations and organizations;
- *Support Palestinian academic and cultural institutions directly without requiring them to partner with Israeli counterparts as an explicit or implicit condition for such support.”

As educators and scholars of conscience in the United States, we fully support this call. We urge our colleagues, nationally, regionally, and internationally, to stand up against Israel’s ongoing scholasticide and to support the non-violent call for academic boycott, disinvestment, and sanctions.

We call on university administrations and faculty in the United States to denounce Israeli assaults on educational institutions and the civilian population of Gaza, and to implement an academic boycott of Israeli institutions.

This boycott should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

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