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The Truth about the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement

Does it stand for Middle East peace or does it seek Israel's destruction?

Leaders of the effort to boycott, divest from and apply sanctions against Israel—the so-called BDS movement—say they stand for an “end to the occupation of the Palestinian territories,” “justice in Palestine” and “freedom for the Palestinian people.” But what are the real motives of BDS leaders—do they really want peace between Israel and the Palestinian people?

What are the facts?

While the BDS movement uses highly emotive language in their appeals for support—such as “ending repression” and “Israeli war crimes”—a closer look at the real motives of the movement reveals a more sinister goal.

First, note that the BDS movement focuses only on alleged war crimes and repression by Israel—and ignores real war crimes and tyrannical repression by other Middle Eastern nations and terrorist organizations. When Hamas and Hizbollah target thousands of rockets at Israeli civilian populations in violation of international law, BDS utters not a word of criticism, let alone a call for boycotts or sanctions. When Iran's government violently crushes peaceful protests and Egypt stifles its press and political opposition with a dictatorial hand, BDS is likewise silent. Why?

By singling out Israel for criticism and economic pressure, BDS employs a double standard—a hypocritical and dishonest tactic frequently used by anti-Israel and anti-Semitic hate groups.

The reason, as we'll see, is that the BDS movement is not really interested in alleged war crimes or repression. Rather its purpose is to delegitimize and then destroy Israel.

The second critical fact about the BDS movement is that while it masquerades behind words like “freedom” and “occupation,” one need only listen closely to its rhetoric to realize that these are code words for the elimination of Israel.

BDS leaders oppose a two-state solution—why? While the United States, Western European powers, Israel and the U.N. Security Council have embraced a “two-state solution” as the basis for peace in the Middle East, BDS leaders, such as Ali Abunimah and Omar Barghouti, are clear: They openly and outspokenly *oppose* a two-state solution. Why?

Because when BDS supporters talk about “the occupation of Palestine,” they refer not to disputed West Bank territories, but to *all* the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea—including all of Israel. When they talk about “freedom,” they don't mean freedom from security roadblocks, they mean freedom from Jews in their midst. When they talk about “occupation,” they mean *not* just Israeli

security forces in the West Bank, they also mean Israelis “occupying” the state of Israel.

The third telling fact about the BDS movement is that it consistently and vehemently opposes any efforts to bring Israelis and Palestinians together to work in peace and on peace. For example, BDS leaders advocate boycotting cultural exchanges between Israelis and Palestinian artists. They condemn educational cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian universities. Most revealingly, they *oppose peace talks* between Israel and the Palestinian leadership, calling them “collaborationist.”

BDS is not about “occupation.”

In short, BDS is not about peaceful coexistence or ending the “occupation” of the West Bank. Indeed, Omar Barghouti, a graduate student at Tel Aviv University and BDS founder, admits, “If the occupation ends . . . would that end support for BDS? No it wouldn't—no.”

Not only do BDS leaders admit this, but they implacably support the “return” of nearly five million *descendants* of Arab refugees who left during Israel's war of independence in 1947. In fact, most of these Palestinians are not truly refugees—fully 95 percent of them have never set foot in Israel.

Most importantly, the immigration of millions of Arab refugees' descendants to Israel would make Jews a minority in their own state. As President Obama has correctly noted, “The ‘right of return’ would extinguish Israel as a Jewish state, and that's not an option.” Yet destroying Israel by flooding it with millions of Palestinians is precisely what BDS leader Barghouti insists upon: “This (the right of return) is something we cannot compromise on.”

BDS's goal: “Extinguish Israel as a Jewish state.” BDS unequivocally rejects Israel's many peace offers—including numerous land-for-peace proposals supported by the United States—and rejects Israel's willingness to sit down to direct peace talks without preconditions.

Thus, the facts make BDS's intentions clear: Rather than being a movement that seeks peace and freedom, it is a movement motivated by an obsessive hate of Zionism and Jews and opposition to the Jewish state—one bent on fomenting strife, conflict and enmity until Israel is utterly defeated.

If you support peace between Israel and the Palestinians, if you support two states for two peoples—living side by side in cultural, social and economic harmony—please oppose the ill-intentioned BDS movement in your community. Speak out against hateful, one-sided campaigns to boycott Israeli goods, to divest from companies that do business with Israel and to enact sanctions against the state of Israel. This is not the path to peace!

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Facts and Logic About the Middle East
P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco, CA 94159
Gerardo Joffe, President

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