

## 1714 In support of international law and human rights in Palestine

Passed 16 April 2015

Proposer: Alex Bustos (Amnesty International)  
Seconded: Hussam Hussein (Ethnic Minorities Officer)

Union Notes:

1. That the Palestinians are a dispossessed peoples, and currently have no recognised sovereign state.
2. That Israel continues to expand its settlements in the occupied West Bank. The settlements are widely regarded as illegal by the United Nations and the international community,<sup>1</sup> and their expansions are facilitated by the annexation of privately owned Palestinian land through the demolition of houses and violent confiscation of property.
3. That Israel is an *apartheid state*, as defined by international law<sup>2</sup> and as widely evidenced by the discriminatory legal system which subjects Palestinians to the constant threat of arbitrary arrest and illegal detention, with no right of representation or trial; rampant violations of their basic human rights including extra-judicial killing, torture, violent harassment and inhumane treatment, and many other documented deplorable "crimes against humanity"<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, the restriction of movement and separation of communities and families through the illegal 'apartheid' wall and extensive system of military checkpoints which cripple Palestinian access to education, healthcare and employment are further manifestations of Israeli apartheid.
4. In the summer of 2014 Israel conducted 'Operation Protective Edge', the most recent of its numerous offensives in the Gaza Strip. Over 2,300 were killed, and 10,626 wounded, a large proportion of which were children. The Gaza strip has been under siege by land, sea, and air since 2007, prohibiting access to many basic supplies for reconstruction. Conditions are so severe in the besieged Gaza strip that they were recently described by a senior official in medical charity *Medicins San Frontieres* like working in an 'open-air prison to patch up prisoners in between their torture sessions'<sup>4</sup>
5. Arabs living in Israel continue to openly face discrimination, living in what many observers have referred to as an "apartheid state."<sup>5</sup> For example, discriminatory citizenship laws enable anyone who claims Jewish identity to receive citizenship automatically, yet deny Palestinians who marry Israelis from full citizenship and the right to live with their family in Israel.<sup>6 7</sup>
6. That UUEAS has existing policy to show solidarity with the Palestinian people.
7. That the Boycott Divestment & Sanctions (BDS) campaign was called for by Palestinian civil society in 2005 to pressure Israel into complying with international law.
8. The NUS Women's Conference, the NUS Postgraduate Conference, and the NUS Black Students Conference recently passed resolutions in support of BDS tactics. Also the NUS National Executive Council has a position to support BDS.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/articles/news/2014/09/israel-must-scrap-illegal-land-grab-west-bank/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%201015/volume-1015-I-14861-English.pdf>  
*International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 30 November, 1974*

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.russelltribunalonpalestine.com/en/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/RToP-Cape-Town-full-findings2.pdf>, "Are Israel's practices against the Palestinian People in breach of the prohibition on Apartheid under international law, Findings of the South Africa Session (Cape Town, 2011), Russell Tribunal on Palestine

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/israelgaza-conflict-medical-charity-official-likens-job-to-patching-up-torture-victims-in-an-openair-prison-9613296.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-makdisi-israel-apartheid-20140518-story.html>

<sup>6</sup> [http://itisapartheid.org/get\\_informed.html](http://itisapartheid.org/get_informed.html)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2007/oct/11/highereducation.uk1>

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9. The BDS movement is growing on campuses across the UK, with Kent, Goldsmiths, Birkbeck, Kingston, Swansea, Exeter, Brunel, the University of Strathclyde, Edinburgh, Dundee, Essex, Sussex and SOAS students all voting in favour of joining the campaign. <sup>8</sup>
10. Many notable academics, such as Stephen Hawking, have endorsed calls for an academic boycott of Israel. Supporters highlight links between Israeli universities and the military, which has a long history of supporting the Israeli Armed Forces in its oppression of the Palestinian people. Tel Aviv University, for example, recently offered fee waivers for students taking part in operation Protective Edge. <sup>9</sup>
11. The declaration in March 2015 of the current Israeli PM Netanyahu "If I'm elected, there will be no Palestinian state" is not constructive for a peaceful and just resolution of the conflict and is against the consensus of the international community.
12. Companies such as British private security firm G4S play a key role in Israel's apartheid system, providing security services and equipment to Israeli prisons, checkpoints, the Apartheid Wall and the Israeli military and police. This is against Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits the transfer of prisoners from occupied territory into the territory of the occupier.

#### Union Believes:

1. That the ongoing 66-year long occupation of Palestine, Israel's multitude of human rights and international law violations, its flagrancy and unaccountability to the international community is abhorrent and should be condemned.
2. That Israeli expansion in the Occupied Territories is a settler-colonial project, predicated on the ethnic cleansing and expulsion of its indigenous people.
3. That racism is systemic within Israeli state policy, with documented anti-Arab, anti-African and anti-migrant discrimination. <sup>10</sup>
4. That Palestinian students have a fundamental right to an education unhindered by the discrimination they currently face.
5. That global boycotts are a non-violent, legitimate, and effective tactic that assisted in the successful struggle against apartheid in South Africa.
6. That international solidarity from students is a crucial part of the Palestine liberation struggle.
7. That international solidarity should be conducted on the terms by the Palestinian people, as per the BDS campaign.
8. That all other methods of pressuring Israeli and the ending of the occupation have failed.
9. As students, we have a duty to show solidarity with oppressed students in other parts of the world.
10. As part of an academic community, we have a responsibility to ensure that ethical considerations and social justice are at the heart of research and academia.

#### Union Resolves:

1. To continue to support the Palestinian cause and remain in solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine.
2. To mandate the Ethical Steering Group to conduct internal research into which union services, products and departments use, employ or work with companies which facilitate Israel's human rights abuses, military capacity, or settlement expansion.
3. To adopt a policy of BDS (as defined here<sup>11</sup>) across all union outlets by severing ties with companies identified as above.

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/malaka-shwaikh/sussex-bds\\_b\\_6961884.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/malaka-shwaikh/sussex-bds_b_6961884.html)

<sup>9</sup> [http://english.tau.ac.il/operation\\_protective\\_edge\\_scholarships](http://english.tau.ac.il/operation_protective_edge_scholarships)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-makdisi-israel-apartheid-20140518-story.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.bdsmovement.net/activecamps/consumer-boycott>

4. To work with BRICUP (British Committee for Universities of Palestine) to lobby the university to adopt an academic boycott of Israeli universities.
5. To lobby the university to provide scholarships for Palestinian students.
6. To support the annual Israeli Apartheid Week initiative through awareness-raising activities.
7. To monitor and be ready to lobby the university to end any contract they might have or intend to sign with G4S or other companies specified as facilitating the occupation as specified above.