



A Prayerful Study of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions



Presbyterian Mission
**Presbyterian
Peacemaking Program**

A Prayerful Study of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions

The 222nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (2016) called upon the denomination and its membership to engage in a prayerful study of the Palestinian civil society call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)¹. Since its inception in 2005, the call for BDS has become a focal point in the conversation and advocacy efforts relating to the conflict in Israel-Palestine. As the debate continues to unfold in government bodies, religious organizations and civil society, it is important to take a step back to read and prayerfully reflect upon the call.

As Presbyterians and people of faith, we take seriously the role we are called to play in helping to bring God's peace and justice to this broken yet holy world. The conflict in Israel-Palestine, and how we as Presbyterians should respond, has caused deep divisions within our denomination. It is our prayer that this resource will help create constructive conversation across the divide. As you read the call from Palestinian civil society you may find yourself nodding in affirmation, despairing over the state of the world, or frustrated over a fundamental disagreement with the tactic or assessment of the conflict. Regardless of your opinion of BDS, it is our hope that this resource will encourage respect and close consideration of the pleas of the Palestinians who crafted the call.

As the 222nd GA (2016) reminds us:

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long played an important role as witness to peacemaking efforts in the Middle East. In the spirit of this tradition, the church needs to serve as a prophetic voice of wisdom and humility amidst the cacophony of reactions to the BDS call. Through a prayerful study of the call for BDS and engaged dialogue with its authors, the church has the opportunity to serve as a gentle voice of love, hope, and reconciliation.”²

It is our desire that this resource will help facilitate an open and honest dialogue as we wrestle with a difficult, yet incredibly important, topic.

1. See pc-biz.org/#/search/3000144 for the text of the overture

2. Ibid

On the cover: Cover image taken at the separation wall in Bethlehem by Ann Fitch, a participant in the 2018 Mosaic of Peace Conference. Full image reads 'Peace, Salaam, and Shalom.'

Section I: Background

In July 2005 a broad and unified Palestinian civil society issued a historic plea to the international community to engage in a strategy of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against the state of Israel until it meets “its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law.”³

It is important to make clear that the call was not issued against Jewish people or Israeli citizens; instead, the call is directed toward the government of Israel alone. It is intended as a nonviolent tool to bring an end to the occupation of Palestinian lands. In this section we will highlight some of the history and important events that helped influence the call.

The call for BDS did not emerge in a vacuum; it was the culmination of decades of frustration with stalled peace negotiations, failed political processes and violent responses from both Israelis and Palestinians that only made the end of the conflict seem even more out of reach. The call grew out of a feeling of both defiance and despair; continuing with negotiations as usual, the writers of the call felt, was not going to yield different results. As the “facts on the ground” deteriorated at a rapid pace, with the continued occupation of Palestinian lands, expansion of Israeli-only settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, discrimination against Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel, and the lack of rights for Palestinian refugees to return home or receive compensation, BDS was seen as a nonviolent tool with a global track record of successfully toppling systems of injustice.

The creation of the State of Israel in 1948 resulted in the displacement of Palestinians from their homes and land. Palestinians who survived the war spread throughout the world. Many sought refuge in nearby Arab countries or the West, and to this day do not have the right to return as full citizens to their former land. A small number were granted citizenship by Israel or residency rights (though not full citizenship) in Jerusalem. The remaining Palestinians live in the Occupied Palestinian Territories of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem live under a combination of either complete or partial Israeli civil and military control. While Israel withdrew its settler population from the Gaza Strip in 2005, it remains under an Israeli administered blockade, with a majority of the population unable to leave and with severe restrictions on materials that can enter the Gaza Strip. The continued occupation and the failure of negotiations to bring about a just and sustainable solution for all parties was a primary motivator of the call for BDS.

Call for BDS in Context: Expanding Settlements and the Separation Wall

Since the conclusion of the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel has built settlements for Israeli citizens in expropriated land throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem. Many of the settlements are similar to suburban developments in the United States, complete with gates, swimming pools, parks, schools and economic subsidies for residents. According to B’Tselem, an Israeli Human Rights Organization, as of 2016 there are “more than 200 Israeli settlements established in the West Bank.”⁴ The settlements, beyond taking away precious land and access to resources, also play a significant role in separating Palestinian villages from each other and severely limiting access through a system of military checkpoints. While Israeli settlements have fountains and other amenities, many Palestinian villages right next door are left without adequate access to water and have sporadic electricity. Settlements are considered illegal according to international law, as expressed by the Fourth Geneva Convention.⁵

The growth of settlements is one of the principle obstacles for a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict and greatly limits travel, work and educational opportunities for Palestinians. Israeli citizens living in settlements in occupied Palestinian land in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are afforded all of the rights and privileges of Israeli citizenship, while Palestinians who live in the West Bank remain under either complete or partial Israeli control without any citizenship rights.

International bodies, including the United Nations and the European Union, have long called for the Israeli government to cease the creation of new settlements. Historically, U.S. administrations — both Democratic and Republican — have made it clear that settlements are impediments to peace. Yet despite the various U.N. resolutions passed, and pressure from government leaders, settlement expansion continued to increase significantly. Seeing the situation worsen despite international outcry inspired Palestinian civil society to turn to the call for BDS as a way to finally bring an end to the growth of settlements.

3. bdsmovement.net/call

4. btselem.org/settlements

5. A portion of this paragraph was reprinted, with permission from the Office of Public Witness Resource: Advocacy and Discipleship: Boycott- The Power of the Pocketbook to Create Social Change. See: pma.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/washington/pdfs/holy_discontentment_boycott.pdf

Separation Wall

In response to a growing number of suicide bombings that marked the Second Palestinian Intifada (Arabic for “Uprising”) in the early 2000s, the Israeli government approved the construction of a Separation Wall with the stated goal of protecting Israeli citizens from violent attacks. The wall-fence hybrid weaves its way in and out of the Green Line and stretches across 420 miles.⁶ By not following the Green Line — the agreement that established the de facto borders of Israel from 1948–1967 — Israel has opened itself up to criticism that alleges security was not the sole factor behind the construction of the wall.⁷ B’Tselem notes, “In constructing the barrier, Israel broke up contiguous Palestinian urban and rural blocs, severed inter-community ties that had been forged and cemented over the course of many generations, and abruptly imposed an arbitrary reconfiguration of space based on settlement boundaries and to suit the convenience of Israeli security forces.”⁸ The construction of the wall has had a profoundly negative impact on the ability of Palestinians to access their land, move freely without restrictions and travel into Israel for economic opportunities, medical treatments and worship at holy sites.

The call for BDS was shaped by the continued construction of the wall and its impact on Palestinian society. In fact, the call came one year after the 2004 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice — the primary legal entity of the United Nations — ruled the wall to be illegal and called for its immediate demolition. The ruling also called for Israel “to make reparation for all damage caused by the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem.”⁹ While Palestinians lauded the ruling, Israel refused to acknowledge the validity of the court.

The Lesson of South Africa

While the comparison between the situation in Israel-Palestine and Apartheid South Africa elicits considerable controversy, it is important to understand that the leaders of Palestinian civil society were greatly influenced by the example of South Africa and the successful use of BDS to help end apartheid. Much like South Africans called upon the international community to join their struggle to topple apartheid, Palestinian civil society is asking international partners to utilize a strategy of BDS against the state of Israel in order to bring an end to the occupation and the realization of a just and sustainable path forward for the Palestinian people.

The expansion of settlements, the building of the Separation Wall and the lessons learned from South Africa are just three of the many historical and contextual events that helped shape the Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS.

Additional Resources:

Settlements

B’Tselem

Americans for Peace Now

Separation Wall

BBC

UN International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on Separation Wall

Questions to Consider

- » Before you read the Call, spend some time — either in pairs or with the group — reflecting on your initial thoughts or feelings toward the strategy of boycott, divestment and sanctions. Can you understand why Palestinian Civil Society would make such a call? Can you understand why it causes fear for some Israeli and Jewish people?
- » Given what you know of the history and background that inspired the call for BDS, do you have an understanding of why Palestinian Civil Society felt BDS was the only option forward to bring about an end to the occupation and conflict in Israel-Palestine?
- » Do you see parallels between the international movement to end Apartheid and the call for BDS against the state of Israel? Are comparisons between the two struggles helpful or harmful?

6. news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3111159.stm

7. Ibid

8. btselem.org/separation_barrier

9. un.org/press/en/2004/icj616.doc.htm

Section II: Definition of Terms

Movements against oppression have long relied on the tools of boycott, divestment and sanctions to respond to situations of injustice in a nonviolent manner. People of faith committed to nonviolence have long been part of these struggles for justice, believing that a violent response is unethical and impractical.

Before we delve into the call from Palestinian civil society, we need to be sure to have a common definition and understanding of the terms “boycott,” “divestment” and “sanctions” and how they fit within the call from Palestinian civil society. To ensure uniformity, we will rely on the Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition of each term. We will also learn how the BDS movement defines each term within the context of the call from Palestinian civil society.

Boycott:

Merriam Webster defines “boycott” as the act of “[engaging] in a concerted refusal to have dealings with (a person, a store, an organization, etc.) usually to express disapproval or to force acceptance of certain conditions.”¹⁰

The decision to boycott, either by refusing to purchase a certain product or support an entity, is both an act of personal protest and a tool to affect larger systemic change.

Within the context of the BDS call, boycott can be directed in three principal ways:

- 1) Commercial boycott of all goods and products manufactured or grown in Israel: Palestinian civil society explicitly calls for a “broad” boycott, meaning a narrow boycott of products made directly in Israeli-controlled settlements is likely not enough, since the proponents of BDS contend that all facets of the Israeli economy benefit from the occupation.
- 2) Academic boycott: The academic boycott can include suspending formal partnerships between Israeli and U.S. universities, such as study-abroad programs or refusing to participate in academic conferences held in Israel.
- 3) Cultural boycott: The cultural boycott calls upon artists and athletes to refuse to perform in Israel and for the boycotting of Israeli artists performing in other countries. Additionally, it would also include the refusal of cultural/artistic events outside of Israel to accept official sponsorship or collaboration with the government of Israel.

According to the BDS movement, boycotts involve withdrawing support for Israel and Israeli and international companies that are involved in the violation of Palestinian human rights, as well as complicit Israeli sporting, cultural and academic institutions.¹¹

Proponents of BDS maintain that all of Israeli society benefits from the continued occupation of Palestinian lands and that the government of Israel uses their academic and cultural partnerships with other countries to further the oppression of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, they maintain that the cultural and academic boycott of South Africa played an instrumental role in the dismantling of Apartheid.

Divestment

Merriam-Webster defines “divestment” as “to deprive or dispossess especially of property, authority, or title.”¹²

Divestment, within the call for BDS, primarily takes the shape of calling upon faith groups and pension funds to withdraw investment in companies profiting from the occupation and human rights abuses against Palestinians. The PC(USA), along with other mainline Protestant denominations like the United Church of Christ, have passed resolutions divesting from companies that directly profit from the occupation of Palestinian land.

The BDS movement says that divestment campaigns urge banks, local councils, churches, pension funds and universities to withdraw investments from all Israeli companies and from international companies involved in violating Palestinian rights.¹³

While the financial ramifications for divestment upon the selected companies might be minimal, it is nonetheless another nonviolent means through which individuals and groups can pressure companies to end their complicity in unjust practices. Even without a substantial financial impact, increased negative attention can prompt a company to alter its business practices.

10. [merriam-webster.com/dictionary/boycott](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/boycott)

11. bdsmovement.net/what-is-bds

12. [merriam-webster.com/dictionary/divestment](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/divestment)

13. bdsmovement.net/what-is-bds

Sanctions

Merriam-Webster defines “sanctions” as “an economic or military coercive measure adopted usually by several nations in concert for forcing a nation violating international law to desist or yield to adjudication”¹⁴

Unlike boycotts or divestment, sanctions must be implemented by governments. Thus, within the call for BDS, individuals and organizations are asked to pressure their respective governmental bodies to enact sanctions against the state of Israel until such a time when the conditions set forth by the call are met.

The BDS movement says that sanctions campaigns pressure governments to fulfill their legal obligation to hold Israel to account including by ending military trade, free-trade agreements and expelling Israel from international forums such as the U.N. and FIFA.¹⁵

While individuals, organizations or governments (as in the case of sanctions) can choose to participate in one, two or all three, taken together boycotts, divestment and sanctions can be powerful nonviolent strategies to help overcome systems of injustice. Nonviolent activists have long relied upon such strategies to effectively pressure companies and governments to change practices they deem to perpetuate injustice and oppress groups of people.

Questions to Consider:

- » Did anything surprise you as you read through the definitions of “boycott,” “divestment” and “sanctions”? Were you familiar with all components of the call for boycott, which include academic, cultural and sporting institutions?
- » Do you find yourself gravitating toward one of the three actions: boycott, divestment or sanctions? Do you find yourself uneasy with any component?

19. [timesofisrael.com/rejecting-settler-fears-pm-says-annexation-plan-wont-mention-palestinian-state](https://www.timesofisrael.com/rejecting-settler-fears-pm-says-annexation-plan-wont-mention-palestinian-state)

20. trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/peacetoprosperty

14. [merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sanctions](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sanctions)

15. bdsmovement.net/what-is-bds

16. [nytimes.com/2019/04/06/world/middleeast/netanyahu-annex-west-bank.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/06/world/middleeast/netanyahu-annex-west-bank.html)

17. ochaopt.org/location/area-c

18. btselem.org/jordan_valley

Section III: Developments: Annexation, Nation State Law, U.S. Policy Changes

Developments that have emerged since the Palestinian Call for BDS in 2016 — both in Israel/Palestine and from Washington, D.C. — have contributed to the continued push for BDS. As activists continue to see policies that violate the rights of Palestinians and make the prospect of a just peace far less likely, the need for a coordinated BDS campaign becomes even more necessary.

Annexation

In the fight of his political life, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a last-minute campaign pledge¹⁶ in April 2019: Should his Likud party win the election, paving the way for him to stay in office, he would begin the process of “extending Israeli sovereignty” over the West Bank. The promise came amid an already heated campaign. Having moved up the election from November to April, Netanyahu was trying to cobble together a precarious coalition as he contended with his strongest challenger to date, Benny Gantz. Ultimately, the results would prove inconclusive and Israelis would head to the polls two more times — in September 2019 and for a third and final time in March 2020. Ultimately, Netanyahu and Gantz came to an agreement and joined forces in a coalition government, allowing for Netanyahu to retain the Prime Minister office for 18 months before stepping aside to be succeeded by Gantz. While this agreement ended nearly a year of uncertainty within domestic Israeli politics, Netanyahu’s April 2019 promise regarding “extending Israeli sovereignty” in the West Bank remains a significant topic of discussion and concern. Through the coalition agreement, Israel could begin the process of extending sovereignty as early as July 1, 2020.

When Netanyahu says he would like to “extend Israeli sovereignty” in the West Bank, he is referring to the process by which Israel will unilaterally annex all or part of Area C of the West Bank, putting all of the land under complete Israeli control.¹⁷ Area C, which comprises approximately 60% of the West Bank, is resource heavy, including most of the Jordan Valley.¹⁸ It also is the home to all of Israel’s settlements discussed earlier in this resource. In annexing the land, Israel would officially make these settlements part of Israel proper. Netanyahu has made clear that the Palestinian residents of Area C will not be granted citizenship rights once the land is annexed.¹⁹ The Prime Minister worked closely with the Trump administration on its plans to annex the West Bank. Indeed, annexation is in part made possible under the “Peace to Prosperity”²⁰ proposal for Israel/Palestine released by

the White House in January 2020. As of the writing of this document, Israel has not yet moved forward with unilateral annexation, though Netanyahu has made clear it is “not off the table.”²¹

The response from Christians on the ground in Israel/Palestine against annexation has been resounding. In an open letter from Bethlehem area clergy, the writers share their concerns: “Bethlehem, surrounded by walls and settlements, already feels like an open prison. Annexation means the prison becomes even smaller, with no hopes for a better future.”²² In May, the 13 Patriarchs and Heads of Local Churches of Jerusalem released a joint statement claimed unilateral annexation would “bring about the loss of any remaining hope for the success of the peace process.”²³ Cry for Hope, a document launched by Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice on July 1, situates their call for action within the current context on the ground in Israel/Palestine, including the unilateral annexation of parts of the occupied West Bank. After laying out the present-day realities, the document calls for Christians worldwide to take “bold” and “decisive” action including to “affirm the Palestinians’ right to resist” and to “join the Palestinians in their creative and nonviolent resistance,” which includes the Palestinian call for BDS.²⁴ The Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is one of the original international endorsers of the statement.

Kairos Palestine, one of the driving forces behind the Cry for Hope document, is a “Christian Palestinian movement, born out of the Kairos Document, which advocates for ending the Israeli occupation and achieving a just solution to the conflict.”²⁵ As a representative diverse group of Palestinian Christians, Kairos Palestine calls for people from across the world to support justice in Palestine and to work for an end to the occupation and mistreatment of the Palestinian people. Within the Kairos Document, there is a specific call for Christians to “stand alongside the oppressed and preserve the word of God as good news for all.”²⁶ BDS, as a nonviolent tool for change, is one mechanism Kairos Palestine suggests Christians utilize as they work for justice on behalf of all in Israel/Palestine.

21. timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-west-bank-annexation-not-off-the-table-issue-is-in-washington

22. globalministries.org/an_open_letter_from_christian_clergy_from_the_bethlehem_area

23. https://www.globalministries.org/a_statement_by_the_patriarchs_and_heads_of_the_holy_land_churches_on_israeli_unilateral_annexation_plans/

24. cryforhope.org

25. kairospalestine.ps/index.php/about-kairos

26. kairospalestine.ps/index.php/about-kairos/kairos-palestine-document

'Nation-State Law'

In July 2018, the Israeli parliament passed a controversial “nation-state law.” Among its provisions, the law 1) “states that ‘the right to exercise national self-determination’ in Israel is ‘unique to the Jewish people.’ 2) relegates Arabic to ‘special status’ while making Hebrew the official language and 3) ‘establishes “Jewish settlement as a national value” and mandates that the state “will labor to encourage and promote its establishment and development.””²⁷ The law was met with criticism both within Israel and abroad. Palestinian citizens of Israel, who comprise 20% of the Israeli population, were particularly vocal. Ayman Odeh, the head of the Joint List, an coalition of Arab political parties in Israel, spoke in opposition in the Parliament, declaring: “Today, I will have to tell my children, along with all the children of Palestinian Arab towns in the country, that the state has declared that it does not want us here. ... It has passed a law of Jewish supremacy and told us that we will always be second-class citizens.”²⁸ Just as it did with annexation, the Cry for Hope document from Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos explicitly names the nation-state law among the indicators of the deterioration of Palestinian rights, claiming the law “legalized institutional discrimination in Israel and the Palestinian territories, officially depriving Palestinians of their rights to life, livelihood, and a future in their homeland.”²⁹ The law, as a result, is another justification for the need to engage in boycott, divestment and sanctions.

Back to Washington

Outside of changes on the ground, advocates have referenced shifts in U.S. policies during the Trump years that underscore the need to pursue BDS. Under the Trump administration, the U.S. moved its Israeli embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and officially recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, cut off humanitarian assistance to the West Bank and Gaza, closed the PLO Mission Office in D.C., and declared in a speech by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that settlements are not “inherently” in violation of international law,³⁰ a departure from previous U.S. policy. Even under the Biden administration, many proponents of BDS see little hope for significant shifts in views from Washington. In fact, several administration officials, including Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen³¹ and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield,³² vowed at their confirmation hearings to oppose any “BDS activities” toward Israel. While the Biden administration has stated it opposes “unilateral steps ... that undercut a negotiated two-state solution,” including “annexation of any territory, settlement activity, [or] demolitions,”³³ there have been no indications that the

Biden administration is willing to utilize any measures to stop such behavior. Without the hopes of pressure from the U.S. government to change the behavior of the Israeli government and their treatment of the Palestinian people, BDS emerges for some as the only option to move forward.

Questions to Consider:

- » How do you think the possible unilateral annexation of parts of the West Bank and the passage of the nation-state law should impact the consideration of BDS?
- » If the new developments on the ground along with shifts in U.S. policies do not merit consideration of BDS, what do you think is a more effective tool?

27. [vox.com/world/2018/7/31/17623978/israel-jewish-nation-state-law-bill-explained-apartheid-netanyahu-democracy](https://www.vox.com/world/2018/7/31/17623978/israel-jewish-nation-state-law-bill-explained-apartheid-netanyahu-democracy)

28. [nbcnews.com/news/world/israel-nation-state-law-prompts-criticism-around-world-n893036](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/israel-nation-state-law-prompts-criticism-around-world-n893036)

29. cryforhope.org

30. [reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-settlements/pompeo-says-u-s-support-for-israeli-settlements-advances-peace-with-palestinians-idUSKBN1Z71LT](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-settlements/pompeo-says-u-s-support-for-israeli-settlements-advances-peace-with-palestinians-idUSKBN1Z71LT)

31. Janet Yellen’s answer can be found on page 40: [finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Dr%20Janet%20Yellen%20Senate%20Finance%20Committee%20QFRs%2001%2021%202021.pdf](https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Dr%20Janet%20Yellen%20Senate%20Finance%20Committee%20QFRs%2001%2021%202021.pdf)

32. [haaretz.com/us-news/.premium-bds-verges-on-antisemitism-biden-s-pick-for-un-envoy-says-1.9488357](https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/.premium-bds-verges-on-antisemitism-biden-s-pick-for-un-envoy-says-1.9488357)

33. [state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-february-11-2021](https://www.state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-february-11-2021)

Section IV: Content of the Call — an invitation to read and reflect on the call

The 222nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (2016) overwhelmingly adopted a resolution calling for Presbyterians to “prayerfully study the call from Palestinian civil society for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) against the state of Israel, as well as resources that oppose this BDS movement.” The Presbyterian Church has long been involved in advocacy and justice work related to the Middle East and Israel-Palestine. The desire to prayerfully study the call is part of that history.

The call from Palestinian civil society has certainly generated fierce debates since its release in 2005. For many Palestinians and those sympathetic to their cause, it has injected renewed energy and strategy as they work for justice and liberation. As the political negotiations and international convenings continue to fail to bring an end to the occupation of Palestinian lands, the call for BDS was seen as a welcome and necessary step in encouraging true solidarity from international partners.

For many Israelis and Jewish people across the world, it has caused considerable anger and fear. With memories of boycotts against Jewish-owned businesses in Europe during the early 20th century and the Holocaust still fresh in the collective memory of the Jewish people, opponents of the call see it as anti-Semitic and a significant stumbling block toward peace.

As Presbyterians we have deep ties and relationships with both Jewish and Palestinian partners; with people who helped craft the call for BDS and those who steadfastly oppose it. As people of faith we must not shy away from difficult conversations. Regardless of your personal opinion on the Palestinian call for BDS, we invite you to prayerfully read and reflect upon the full call and assess where God is calling you to engage in the service of a just and lasting end to the conflict in Israel-Palestine.

The full call can be found at the end of this resource.

Questions to consider:

- » Before you read the call, take some time either by yourself or with a partner to share some initial thoughts on the context that led to the call. Think through how you feel you will react as you read. Compare this against your reaction after you have read the call in full.
- » How do you think the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should respond to the call for BDS given our longstanding

relationship with both Palestinian and Israeli partners?
How can we honor our relationships across the board while remaining true to our call as Christians to work for justice?

- » If you feel you have a firm position on BDS, take some time to write down questions you would ask to those who crafted the call and those who oppose it.

Before proceeding to the next section, take some time to pray as a group.

Section V: PC(USA) policies related to Boycott Divestment and Sanctions

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessor bodies have long turned to nonviolent economic tools — such as boycotts and divestment — as a way to live out the Christian faith. Throughout the years General Assembly actions have called upon the denomination and its members to engage in boycotts and divestment campaigns as a way to stand in solidarity with groups facing oppression. This has included both international campaigns, including against apartheid South Africa, and domestic campaigns in support of farmworkers in the U.S. who face inhumane and unjust working conditions. At the heart of the call for boycott and divestment is the belief that how Christians choose to spend and invest their money is as much an economic decision as an ethical and religious one.

South Africa

As South Africa continued to unravel under an oppressive government, many religious and civil society groups sought ways in which they could work in the service of ending apartheid. In 1960, after the infamous Sharpeville Massacre, the 172nd General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church “[expressed] its horror at the dangerous conditions in South Africa ... [and called] upon [the U.S.] Government to continue to use its influence both directly and in the United Nations, to persuade the Union of South Africa to turn from the policies which bring only despair.”³⁴

From 1960 until the end of apartheid in the early 1990s, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessor bodies joined in the call for divestment. The 196th General Assembly (1984) produced “Divestment as an Ethical Strategy,” which helped the denomination determine whether the PC(USA) should pursue divestment from stocks in corporations that engaged in business with South Africa. Mandated by an action of the 193rd General Assembly (1981), the question as to whether or not to divest from South Africa related directly to the idea that our denomination’s investment portfolio should not support a racist regime that systematically oppressed its nonwhite population. Through its actions in South Africa, the PC(USA) made clear its commitment against racism and its strategy of using its economic resources as a tool to engage in nonviolent resistance.

Boycotts

Commended for study by the 1979 General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church, the report “‘Boycotts: Policy Analysis and Criteria,’ explains how the church considers boycott activity in light of God’s requirement of justice and because of the existence of alleged injustice.” While the intended result is to change policies of injustice through exerting economic pressure, Christians engage in boycotts as one way to actively embody their faith. As early as 1937, the United Presbyterian Church “[favored] the adoption by the Congress of legislation ... which forbids the shipment of Child Labor goods in interstate commerce, and which requires informative labels to be attached to Child Labor goods.’ (Presumably for the purpose of discouraging buyers, thus an implicit consumer boycott.)”³⁵

Some of you might remember the role the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) played in the boycott against Nestle. Beginning in the late 1970s, a number of religious and secular institutions began to call out the marketing practices of the Nestle corporation. Supporters of the boycott maintain Nestle targeted mothers in underdeveloped countries, attempting to convince them that Nestle baby formula was superior to breast milk. The push to convince mothers to buy formula came despite the significant health risks in many of these countries, stemming from a lack of access to clean water, and the obvious financial strain of purchasing products when most of the women and their families lived in poverty. A reliance on baby formula, instead of breast milk, resulted in increased rates of serious health issues for children. Presbyterians joined a broad coalition of ecumenical, interfaith and secular partners to demand that Nestle change its marketing practices so as to not target impoverished women in developing countries. The boycott ended after Nestle promised to follow the guidelines set forth by the World Health Organization relating to infant formula. In an interview for a news story announcing the end of the boycott, the Rev. James Andrews, then co-stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is quoted as saying the role of churches in the boycott “has proved Christians can change things in the secular world.”³⁶

More recently, the 214th General Assembly (2002) voted to “endorse and support the national boycott of Taco Bell

34. history.pcusa.org/blog/presbyterians-apartheid-and-divestment#foot2

35. Reprinted with permission from the Office of Public Witness Resource: Advocacy and Discipleship: Boycott- The Power of the Pocketbook to Create Social Change. See: pma.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/washington/pdfs/holy_discontentment_boycott.pdf

36. upi.com/Archives/1984/02/10/Religion-in-AmericaNEWLNChurches-welcome-end-of-Nestle-boycott/2923445237200/

restaurants and all Taco Bell products until Taco Bell, SixLS Corporation, and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers mutually agree to begin negotiations that can lead to resolution of inhumane working and living conditions.” With farmworkers forced to labor under dangerous and exploitative working conditions, Presbyterians saw joining the boycott as way to confront injustice and stand in solidarity with oppressed workers. The boycott, which included people of faith and human rights activists across the nation, concluded in 2005 after farmworkers and Yum! Brands/Taco Bell signed an agreement.³⁷

Boycott of Israeli Settlement Products

In 2012, the 220th General Assembly overwhelmingly voted to adopt a boycott of all products coming from the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The action of the General Assembly does not call for a boycott of Israeli products as a whole; instead, it is geared solely toward those coming from Israeli settlements on Palestinian lands. Originally, the overture called for a boycott of products from a limited number of companies but was amended on the floor to include all products. The General Assembly also called upon “all nations to prohibit the import of products made by enterprises in Israeli settlements on Palestinian lands.” The boycott is to last “until significant progress toward Palestinian rights and independence can be reported to the General Assembly or General Assembly Mission Council.”³⁸ The decision to boycott settlement products must be understood within the larger framework of how Presbyterians have long engaged in economic tools as a form of nonviolent resistance. Given the ways Palestinians and their economy continue to suffer under the weight of a military occupation with no end in sight, the PC(USA) has chosen to encourage its members to ensure that their money does not go to companies who continue to serve the purposes of the occupation.

37. Reprinted with permission from the Office of Public Witness Resource: Advocacy and Discipleship: Boycott- The Power of the Pocketbook to Create Social Change. See: pma.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/washington/pdfs/holy_discontentment_boycott.pdf

38. pc-biz.org/#/search/3775

39. pcusa.org/news/2014/9/10/when-stewardship-act-public-witness/

40. presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/GA-1984-Divestment-Strategy.pdf

41. pc-biz.org/#/search/4595

Divestment

In addition to boycotts, the Presbyterian Church has a longstanding commitment to ensuring its investments align with its reformed theological identity. In its earliest days, this meant Presbyterian denominational entities refused to invest stock in companies whose primary profit derived from tobacco, alcohol or weapons. The Presbyterian Church in the United States described the responsibility of the church in matters relating to investment as follows:

“The church is also faced with the decision concerning how it should spend and invest sums of money under the control of its courts, boards, agencies, and institutions. The power to spend and to invest implies the power to refrain from spending or investing. The church has not only the right but the responsibility to be selective in the use of its funds. It is the responsibility of the church to acquaint itself with the products and policies of every firm with which it trades and every corporation in which it holds or purchases stock....” (Minutes, PCUS, 1968, Part I, pp. 99–100)³⁹

Nearly two decades later, in a 1984 report produced by the Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) Committee, the primary mechanism through which the PC(USA) engages in ethical investment, the authors write, “The theology of mission extends the concept of stewardship into society and insists that the full influence and impact of church investment be seen in the larger social context, with motivation beyond financial gain, important as that is.”⁴⁰ MRTI maintains a comprehensive list of companies in which the PC(USA) recommends divestment.

Both reports point to the Reformed understanding that our financial decisions cannot be separate from our theology: how we spend our money and how we invest our resources must always be rooted in our Christian faith. While ethical investment might not always be the most financially prudent in every situation, as followers of Christ we must not engage in financial practices that will harm those suffering from injustice.

Divestment related to Israel/Palestine

In a contentious — and narrow — vote, the 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) voted to “instruct the Presbyterian Foundation and the Board of Pensions of the PC(USA), to divest from Caterpillar, Inc., Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola Solutions, in accord with our church’s decades-long socially responsible investment (SRI) history, and not to reinvest in these companies until

the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee of the PC(USA) is fully satisfied that product sales and services by these companies are no longer in conflict with our church investment policy.”⁴¹ This action by the General Assembly was thus limited to three U.S.-based companies who, in the determination of the body, were profiting off the occupation of Palestinian lands. The decision of the General Assembly was the culmination of over a decade of engagement between the denomination, principally through MRTI, and the three companies. In compliance with the denomination’s socially responsible investment policies, divestment was only considered after engagement with these companies, including attempts to raise concerns at shareholder meetings, failed to yield any substantive changes in their respective participation in the Israeli occupation.

An amendment from the floor added that “this action on divestment is not to be construed or represented by any organization of the PC(USA) as divestment from the State of Israel, or an alignment with or endorsement of the global BDS (Boycott, Divest and Sanctions) movement.”⁴² By adding this language, the General Assembly made clear that the PC(USA) was not at the time endorsing or joining the call for BDS from the Palestinian Civil Society.

The actions of the General Assembly made immediate headlines; from the *New York Times* to the *Jerusalem Post*, the PC(USA) action was covered in news outlets across the globe. Met with both swift celebration and condemnation, the decision to divest from Hewlett Packard, Motorola Solutions and Caterpillar distinguished the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as one of the largest mainline Protestant denominations to take any divestment action in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Questions to consider:

- » Have you ever engaged in a boycott either through participation in a church/community group or on your own?
- » Were you aware of the longstanding history of Presbyterians engaging in boycotts and divestment? In light of this history, do you find the actions of the General Assembly to divest from Motorola Solutions, Hewlett Packard and Caterpillar to be in line with previous Presbyterian actions related to divestment?
- » Critics of divestment will often point to the fact that its minimal financial implications make the practice impractical. Do you share these criticisms of divestment?

42. pc-biz.org/#/search/4595

Section VI: Various Perspectives

The following section uplifts the various perspectives on BDS from select Jewish, Muslim, Palestinian, Christian and Israeli voices. As you can imagine, each community is not a monolith. Through these diverse, and sometimes conflicting perspectives, we hope to provide a glimpse of how members of each community approach BDS, understanding that it is impossible to capture all voices or opinions in the limited scope of this resource.

Two of the summaries were taken from interviews conducted by PC(USA) staff during visits to Israel/Palestine.

VOICES OPPOSING BDS Jewish Israelis

During a meeting with a PC(USA) staff delegation to Israel/Palestine, Rabbi David Rosen, who previously served as the Chief Rabbi of Ireland, spoke of the ways in which Israelis, Palestinians and others engaged in the conflict have adopted a “zero-sum mentality and approach.” Rosen speaks to the need to transform the discourse to a “win-win approach in which Palestinians understand Palestinian dignity will only flourish when Israel really feels secure and accepted in the region and respected in terms of its historical attachments. And Israel needs to understand that it will only be able to have that respect and only be able to live in security when Palestinian dignity can flourish.” According to Rosen, BDS will not bring about such a mentality shift. Instead, “All it will do is cause the shutters to be bolted down more severely, maybe even further emulate the situation so that in fact it will only backfire on Palestinian interests.” Continuing, Rosen argues, BDS is not only impractical, but also not moral, “because what’s morally good is ways in which we get people to humanize one another, and not to demonize one another. And therefore, what’s really important is to invest in all those initiatives that are bringing people together and promoting understanding collaboration, whether it’s political advocacy, whether it’s in terms of education initiatives, or it’s in the areas of interreligious dialogue, and there are so many different things that can be supported.” Rosen also claims BDS “suggests that there’s something rotten about [Israeli] presence here ... and that’s why it causes us to react in a manner that doesn’t really help the end goals that the BDS Movement really seeks.” For Rosen, these reasons underscore how BDS will only close off conversation

43. timesofisrael.com/palestinian-activist-eu-should-defund-bds-like-trump-slashed-aid-for-unrwa

44. theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/10/soda-stream-moves-west-bank-factory/382086

45. jewishstandard.timesofisrael.com/how-bds-hurts-the-palestinians

and discourage forums in which Israelis and Palestinians can come together and see each other as human beings deserving respect and understanding.

Palestinians

Bassem Eid, a political commentator and human rights activist based in Jerusalem, is one of the most vocal Palestinians opposing BDS.

In September 2018 at a panel discussion at the EU Parliament, Eid claimed “BDS will never ever want to achieve any kind of peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians.” The BDS wants to destroy Israel, and, as a Palestinian, I don’t have time for that.”⁴³ Eid argues BDS is actively hurting Palestinian interests, especially from economic perspective. In a 2020 interview, Eid points to the boycott of SodaStream, a product people use to make their own carbonated water. SodaStream operated its primary manufacturing facility in a settlement in the Occupied West Bank. As a result, the BDS movement called for SodaStream to be included in the list of companies to boycott. Opponents of BDS responded by noting the fact that many Palestinians were employed by SodaStream and worked at this plant. After years of pressure, SodaStream announced in 2014 that it would move its factory out of the West Bank settlement to a town in southern Israel.⁴⁴ With the move out of the settlement, SodaStream let the Palestinians working at the plant go. Eid uses this as an example of why BDS is harmful to Palestinians, noting: “After the move, 1,500 Palestinians lost their jobs, and today the yearly income of SodaStream in southern Israel is triple what it used to be in the West Bank. So, who is the loser here? The consequence of the move is that Israelis are making more money and the Palestinians are losing more money.”⁴⁵ For Eid, the economic impact of Palestinians losing their jobs and other benefits shows how BDS ultimately hurts Palestinians more than it does Israelis.

VOICES SUPPORTING BDS Palestinians

A Muslim Voice from Palestine:

Omar Barghouti, the co-founder of the BDS movement, asserts the movement found inspiration from the anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa, as well as the civil rights movement in the United States. Palestinians, though, for Barghouti, did not need to just look to outside sources: they were able to point to decades of nonviolent resistance to oppression from their own people, as they developed the call for BDS. In an interview with PCUSA staff visiting Israel/Palestine,

Barghouti clearly lays out the goals of BDS: “Specifically, BDS calls for ending the occupation of 1967, including the wall and illegal settlements. Number two, ending the system of racial discrimination against Palestinians who are citizens of the state of Israel. And number three, the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes of origin in accordance with U.N. resolutions.” Unlike in South Africa, where the African National Committee called for a boycott of all South Africans who benefited from Apartheid, Barghouti contrasts the Palestinian call for BDS noting it does not target Israeli individuals but rather “Israeli institutions as well as international corporations that are implicated in Israel’s violations of international law.”

When debating the resolution calling on the PC(USA) to divest from Motorola Solutions, Hewlett Packard and Caterpillar, during the 222nd General Assembly (2016), the issue arose as to whether by adopting this resolution, the PCUSA would officially endorse the global BDS movement. Wishing to separate itself from the global BDS movement, the Assembly adopted a revision to the original overture to clearly indicate the actions taken by the PC(USA) would not align the denomination with this movement. While one might imagine Barghouti would see this negatively, for him, action, and not necessarily the semantics of “endorsing the BDS movement,” is more important.

Intersectional in nature, BDS rejects all form of racism, including anti-Semitism. Additionally, for Barghouti, it is critical to understand BDS has the widespread support of Palestinian civil society: “All political parties, women’s unions, trade unions, farmers, academics just about every main entity in the Palestinian society is part of the [BDS National Committee], which leads the global movement.” Barghouti also highlights the importance of Christians from around the world offering their support to BDS as it reminds Palestinians, who in his words have “grown into thinking that the world has forgotten us. We’re the forgotten, oppressed communities of the world. But they saw that, here’s a church in the United States, thousands of miles away, doing something in the right direction to support our rights. There is hope at the end of the tunnel. So, I’d like to just amplify this hope to every Presbyterian member.”

A Palestinian Voice from Diaspora – Rep. Rashida Tlaib

In August 2019, Israel announced it was barring Congresswomen Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib from entering the country. Both elected in 2018, Reps. Omar and Tlaib, the first two female Muslim members of Congress, were banned, according to Israeli officials, due to their support for the BDS movement. In response, Rep. Tlaib, the first Palestinian American woman to be elected to Congress, initially attempted to receive permission from the Israeli Interior Ministry to be allowed to enter the country only to visit her family, including her elderly grandmother. Rep. Tlaib agreed not to “promote boycotts against Israel during [her] visit.”⁴⁶ Ultimately, despite receiving the exemption, Rep. Tlaib decided against traveling to Israel. Just a few weeks before she was banned from traveling to Israel, Rep. Tlaib, in an interview on CNN with Jake Tapper, reaffirmed her support for BDS, noting both the diversity of its backers and what drives the movement: “I can tell you, they’re — all around college campuses, there are Jews, Muslims, Hindus, all different kinds of backgrounds who are pushing back against racist policies in Israel, because they see that — the human rights violations of children being detained, the fact that my grandmother, who lives in the West Bank right now, does not have equality, she doesn’t have freedom of travel.”⁴⁷ In the same interview, Rep. Tlaib responds to one of the critiques often leveled against supporters of the BDS movement: In a region with many oppressive governments, why single out Israel? Tlaib quickly dismisses the concern, noting she would also support efforts aimed at the Egyptian or Saudi governments for their human rights abuses.

The voices profiled in this section offer just a glimpse of the perspectives on BDS from Muslims and Jews, and Israelis and Palestinians, including those in the diaspora like Rep. Tlaib. In a limited resource, it is, of course, not possible to highlight all voices or reasons why people have chosen to support or oppose the BDS movement. We hope, however, it has offered you some insight into the complex conversations that emerge as a result of the call for BDS. We encourage you to seek out more voices of Palestinians and Israelis as you continue to prayerfully engage the topic of BDS.

46. [npr.org/2019/08/16/751674684/israel-says-it-will-grant-visa-to-rep-rashida-tlaib-reversing-earlier-ban](https://www.npr.org/2019/08/16/751674684/israel-says-it-will-grant-visa-to-rep-rashida-tlaib-reversing-earlier-ban)

47. [transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1907/28/sotu.01.html](https://www.transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1907/28/sotu.01.html)

48. [jpost.com/BDS-THREAT/Maryland-joins-nearly-half-of-American-states-with-anti-BDS-laws-508281](https://www.jpost.com/BDS-THREAT/Maryland-joins-nearly-half-of-American-states-with-anti-BDS-laws-508281)

49. [pc-biz.org/#/search/3000144](https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000144)

Questions to Consider

- » Did you find yourself surprised by any of the arguments either in favor of or opposing BDS? What questions do you have for each of the voices profiled?
- » Spend some time re-reading the opinions you disagree with the most. Is there anything new you've learned? Even if you ultimately disagree, can you see where they might be coming from?
- » What voices do you think are missing from the profiles above? Take some time to research additional voices from Israel/Palestine that should be included as part of this conversation. Share them with others in your group.

Section VII: Next Steps for Presbyterians

The situation in Israel-Palestine remains dire. Despite the efforts of many and increased attention to the region, there is little hope at the present moment that a viable and durable end to the conflict is forthcoming. As the situation continues to deteriorate, the debate regarding BDS continues to pick up steam. Steadily, the call for BDS from Palestinian civil society has gained traction with academic, religious and cultural groups that see BDS as the only tool left to overcome the occupation. Yet even as many have joined the call, opposition to BDS remains strong. In the past few years there has been an increase in legislation — both at the state and federal level — aimed at criminalizing BDS against Israel. From Kansas to Maryland and Arizona to New York, state legislatures have introduced bills to limit the ability of citizens to engage in BDS.⁴⁸ At the federal level, bipartisan legislation is under consideration in both houses of Congress that could, if passed, result in fines for U.S. citizens who choose to use BDS as a tool for nonviolent protest against the occupation.

As the debates intensify and legislation is considered, Presbyterians are left with the task of discerning how best to use our voice in the service of a just peace for all who call Israel-Palestine home. The resolution from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to prayerfully study the call for BDS reminded Presbyterians of the longstanding role we have played in the service of Middle East peace, and the hope that through intentional dialogue across difference we could serve as a “gentle voice of love, hope, and reconciliation.”⁴⁹ With that desire in mind, here are a few suggestions on next steps you can take individually and as a congregation to continue striving for justice in Israel-Palestine:

- » Plan an adult Sunday school or educational forum on the issue of boycott, divestment and sanctions. In addition to this resource, invite local interfaith and ecumenical partners who represent the diverse spectrum of opinions on the matter to lead a session.
- » To ensure the conversation reaches a wide audience, organize a prayerful study of BDS at the Presbytery level during a workshop or open hour time.
- » Stay up to date with the situation in Israel-Palestine. Sign up to receive updates from the PC(USA) Mission Co-Worker in Israel-Palestine. The Israel-Palestine Mission Network, one of the official Mission Networks of the PC(USA), created by an action of the 2004 General Assembly, “encourages congregations and presbytery mission committees, task groups and other entities, toward specific mission goals that will create currents of wider and deeper involvement with Israel/Palestine.” Visit their website to learn more about the situation in Israel-Palestine and ways you can stay involved.

- » The Prayerful Study of BDS overture called for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to engage in intentional dialogue in an ecumenical and interfaith setting with those who support BDS as well as those who oppose BDS. In addition to adult education forums within your own congregation, consider organizing an ecumenical or interfaith study series on the call for BDS. Again, this should include both voices who support and oppose the call for BDS.
- » Travel to the region. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provides several opportunities for travel. The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program hosts the Mosaic of Peace Conference and many presbyteries also arrange trips to the region. Ensure that your itinerary includes time where you can engage directly with those who wrote the call for BDS as well as with those who oppose the call for BDS. If you are unable to travel at this time, consider ways to connect with our Israeli and Palestinian partners via Zoom or other platforms.

These are just a few suggestions as you and your congregation consider how to stay engaged in the service of a just peace in Israel-Palestine. Regardless of what actions you take, we encourage that your engagement does not end after reading the Palestinian civil society call for BDS. We pray you will continue to see where God is calling you to help bring justice and peace to Israel-Palestine.

Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS

One year after the historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which found Israel's wall built on occupied Palestinian territory to be illegal, Israel continues its construction of the colonial wall with total disregard to the court's decision. Thirty-eight years into Israel's occupation of the Palestinian West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights, Israel continues to expand Jewish colonies. It has unilaterally annexed occupied East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights and is now de facto annexing large parts of the West Bank by means of the wall. Israel is also preparing — in the shadow of its planned redeployment from the Gaza Strip — to build and expand colonies in the West Bank. Fifty-seven years after the state of Israel was built mainly on land ethnically cleansed of its Palestinian owners, a majority of Palestinians are refugees, most of whom are stateless. Moreover, Israel's entrenched system of racial discrimination against its own Arab-Palestinian citizens remains intact.

In light of Israel's persistent violations of international law; and Given that, since 1948, hundreds of U.N. 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; and 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 nonviolent 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 U.N. resolution 194.

Endorsed by:

The Palestinian political parties, unions, associations, coalitions and organizations below represent the three integral parts of the people of Palestine: Palestinian refugees, Palestinians under occupation and Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Unions, Associations, Campaigns

Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine

(coordinating body for the major political parties in the Occupied Palestinian Territory) • Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights (PICCR)

Union of Arab Community Based Associations (ITTIJAH), Haifa

Forum of Palestinian NGOs in Lebanon

Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU)

General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW)

General Union of Palestinian Teachers (GUPT)

Federation of Unions of Palestinian University Professors and Employees

Consortium of Professional Associations

Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC)

Health Work Committees — West Bank

Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)

Union of Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC)

Union of Health Work Committees — Gaza (UHCW)

Union of Palestinian Farmers

Occupied Palestine and Syrian Golan Heights Advocacy Initiative (OPGAI)

Palestinian General Union of People With Disability

Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees (PFWAC)

Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)

Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign

Union of Teachers of Private Schools

Union of Women's Work Committees, Tulkarem (UWWC)

Dentists' Association — Jerusalem Center

Palestinian Engineers Association

Lawyers' Association

Network for the Eradication of Illiteracy and Adult Education, Ramallah
Coordinating Committee of Rehabilitation Centers – West Bank
Coalition of Lebanese Civil Society Organizations (150 organizations)
Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR), network of student-based Canadian university associations

Refugee Rights Associations/Organizations

Al-Ard Committees for the Defense of the Right of Return, Syria
Al-Awda Charitable Society, Beit Jala
Al Awda - Palestine Right-to-Return Coalition, U.S.A.
Al-Awda Toronto
Aidun Group — Lebanon
Aidun Group — Syria
Alrowwad Cultural and Theatre Training Center, Aida refugee camp
Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced (ADRID), Nazareth
BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Bethlehem
Committee for Definite Return, Syria
Committee for the Defense of Palestinian Refugee Rights, Nablus
Consortium of the Displaced Inhabitants of Destroyed Palestinian Villages and Towns
Filastinuna — Commission for the Defense of the Right of Return, Syria
Handala Center, 'Azza (Beit Jibreen) refugee camp, Bethlehem
High Committee for the Defense of the Right of Return, Jordan
(including personal endorsement of 71 members of parliament, political parties and unions in Jordan)
High National Committee for the Defense of the Right of Return, Ramallah
International Right of Return Congress (RORC)
Jermana Youth Forum for the Defense of the Right of Return, Syria
Laji Center, Aida camp, Bethlehem
Local Committee for Rehabilitation, Qalandia refugee camp, Jerusalem
Local Committee for Rehabilitation of the Disabled, Deheishe refugee camp, Bethlehem
Palestinian National Committee for the Defense of the Right of Return, Syria
Palestinian Return Association, Syria
Palestinian Return Forum, Syria
Palestine Right-of-Return Coalition (Palestine, Arab host

countries, Europe, North America)
Palestine Right-of-Return Confederation-Europe (Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden)
Palestinian Youth Forum for the Right of Return, Syria
PLO Popular Committees — West Bank refugee camps
PLO Popular Committees — Gaza Strip refugee camps
Popular Committee — al-'Azza (Beit Jibreen) refugee camp, Bethlehem
Popular Committee — Deheishe refugee camp, Bethlehem
Shaml - Palestinian Diaspora and Refugee Center, Ramallah
Union of Women's Activity Centers — West Bank Refugee Camps
Union of Youth Activity Centers — Palestine Refugee Camps, West Bank and Gaza
Women's Activity Center — Deheishe refugee camp, Bethlehem
Yafa Cultural Center, Balata refugee camp, Nablus

Organizations

Abna' al-Balad Society, Nablus
Addameer Center for Human Rights, Gaza
Addameer Prisoners' Support and Human Rights Association, Ramallah
Alanqa' Cultural Association, Hebron
Al-Awda Palestinian Folklore Society, Hebron
Al-Doha Children's Cultural Center, Bethlehem
Al-Huda Islamic Center, Bethlehem
Al-Jeel al-Jadid Society, Haifa
Al-Karameh Cultural Society, Um al-Fahm
Al-Maghazi Cultural Center, Gaza
Al-Marsad Al-Arabi, occupied Syrian Golan Heights
Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, Gaza
Al-Nahda Cultural Forum, Hebron
Al-Taghrid Society for Culture and Arts, Gaza
Alternative Tourism Group, Beit Sahour (ATG)
Al-Wafa' Charitable Society, Gaza
Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ)
Arab Association for Human Rights, Nazareth (HRA)
Arab Center for Agricultural Development (ACAD)
Arab Center for Agricultural Development-Gaza
Arab Educational Institute — Open Windows (affiliated with Pax Christie International)
Arab Orthodox Charitable Society — Beit Sahour
Arab Orthodox Charity — Beit Jala
Arab Orthodox Club — Beit Jala
Arab Orthodox Club — Beit Sahour
Arab Students' Collective, University of Toronto
Arab Thought Forum, Jerusalem (AFT)
Association for Cultural Exchange Hebron - France

Association Najdeh, Lebanon
 Authority for Environmental Quality, Jenin
 Bader Society for Development and Reconstruction, Gaza
 Canadian Palestine Foundation of Quebec, Montreal
 Center for the Defense of Freedoms, Ramallah
 Center for Science and Culture, Gaza
 Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ramallah- Al-Bireh District
 Child Development and Entertainment Center, Tulkarem
 Committee for Popular Participation, Tulkarem
 Defense for Children International-Palestine Section, Ramallah (DCI/PS)
 El-Funoun Palestinian Popular Dance Troupe
 Ensan Center for Democracy and Human Rights, Bethlehem
 Environmental Education Center, Bethlehem
 FARAH — Palestinian Center for Children, Syria
 Ghassan Kanafani Society for Development, Gaza
 Ghassan Kanafani Forum, Syria
 Gaza Community Mental Health Program, Gaza (GCMHP)
 Golan for Development, occupied Syrian Golan Heights
 Halhoul Cultural Forum, Hebron
 Himayeh Society for Human Rights, Um al-Fahm
 Holy Land Trust — Bethlehem
 Home of Saint Nicholas for Old Ages — Beit Jala
 Human Rights Protection Center, Lebanon
 In'ash al-Usrah Society, Ramallah
 International Center of Bethlehem (Dar An-Nadweh)
 Islah Charitable Society-Bethlehem
 Jafra Youth Center, Syria
 Jander Center, al-Azza (Beit Jibreen) refugee camp, Bethlehem
 Jerusalem Center for Women, Jerusalem (JCW)
 Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center (JLAC)
 Khalil Al Sakakini Cultural Center, Ramallah
 Land Research Center, Jerusalem (LRC)
 Liberated Prisoners' Society, Palestine
 Local Committee for Social Development, Nablus
 Local Committee for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, Nablus
 MA'AN TV Network, Bethlehem
 Medical Aid for Palestine, Canada
 MIFTAH-Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy, Ramallah
 Muwatin-The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy
 National Forum of Martyr's Families, Palestine
 Near East Council of Churches Committee for Refugee Work — Gaza Area
 Network of Christian Organizations — Bethlehem (NCOB)
 Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace, Jerusalem
 Palestinian Counseling Center, Jerusalem (PCC)
 Palestinian Democratic Youth Union, Lebanon
 Palestinian Farmers' Society, Gaza
 Palestinian Hydrology Group for Water and Environment Resources Development-Gaza
 Palestinian Prisoners' Society-West Bank
 Palestinian Society for Consumer Protection, Gaza
 Palestinian University Students' Forum for Peace and Democracy, Hebron
 Palestinian Women's Struggle Committees
 Palestinian Working Women Society for Development (PWWSO)
 Popular Art Centre, Al-Bireh
 Prisoner's Friends Association — Ansar Al-Sajeen, Majd al-Krum
 Public Aid Association, Gaza
 Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies
 Saint Afram Association — Bethlehem
 Saint Vincent De Paule — Beit Jala
 Senior Citizen Society — Beit Jala
 Social Development Center, Nablus
 Society for Self-Development, Hebron
 Society for Social Work, Tulkarem
 Society for Voluntary Work and Culture, Um al-Fahm
 Society of Friends of Prisoners and Detainees, Um al-Fahm
 Sumoud-Political Prisoners Solidarity Group, Toronto
 Tamer Institute for Community Education, Ramallah
 TCC — Teacher's Creativity Center, Ramallah
 Wi'am Center, Bethlehem
 Women's Affairs Technical Committee, Ramallah and Gaza (WATC)
 Women's Studies Center, Jerusalem (WSC)
 Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling, Jerusalem (WCLAC)
 Yafa for Education and Culture, Nablus
 Yazour Charitable Society, Nablus
 YMCA-East Jerusalem
 Youth Cooperation Forum, Hebron
 YWCA-Palestine
 Zakat Committee-al-Khader, Bethlehem
 Zakat Committee-Deheishe camp, Bethlehem
 The Palestinian Center for Rapprochement between People (PCR)
 Alternative Voice in the Galilee (AVIG)



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Peacemaking Program**

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