

PAPER 12

BOYCOTTING ISRAEL

A CRASH COURSE ON THE TRUTH

The International Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions Campaign



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WHAT IS THE BDS CAMPAIGN?

The **International Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Campaign** against Israel (known in short as **BDS**) has become an increasingly popular and controversial subject of discussion. Its efficacy has been debated, but its sheer boldness and unapologetic nature has been seen as the most threatening aspect of the resistance movement. The campaign officially began in 2005 with Palestinian civil society calling upon the world to join them in a boycott, divestment, and sanctions campaign against Israel, in order to mount pressure on Israel to end its violations of Palestinian human rights. It was the boycott that led South Africa to dismantle apartheid, and in this path, the BDS movement hopes to end Israeli apartheid and the occupation of Palestine.

The occupation of Palestine has lasted roughly half a century and remains to be the longest modern-day occupation. Israel continues to enjoy the benefits of unconditional support from America and has not been punished for its disregard of international law. Its nuclear arsenal is never discussed, and it was found guilty of war-crimes in both 2006 in Lebanon and 2008 in Gaza. Despite this, Israel has never been sanctioned or punished for its crimes against humanity. Thus, Palestinian civil society has called on individuals and groups worldwide to take matters into their own hands. It's time to alienate Israel and call it out for what it is: an apartheid state.

Throughout the years, various victories have been gained in the BDS movement and many campaigns are underway. As Israel continues to act with disregard for international law, the BDS movement continues to gain momentum. The strategy is simple: Israel must be forced to end its aggressions, and this can only come from mounted pressure. The movement is seen as a threat and attempts have been made to legalize the boycott. The boycott movement can be separated into three parts: academic, cultural, and consumer.

THE BOYCOTT MOVEMENT

1 THE ACADEMIC BOYCOTT

The academic boycott aims to academically isolate Israeli universities and academia as they are an integral part to the occupation and continued subjugation of the Palestinian people. This boycott includes any and all co-operation with any and all Israeli institutions.

2 THE CULTURAL BOYCOTT

The cultural boycott of Israel promotes the alienation of Israel in terms of culture and art in order to mount pressure and put an end to apartheid. Artists have been called on to boycott the region and not play in Israel. Artists like **Elvis Costello** and **Santana** have refused to play in Israel due to their treatment of the Palestinian people. The academic and cultural boycotts were also integral parts of ending apartheid in South Africa and it is from this example that the movement draws inspiration.

3: THE CONSUMER BOYCOTT

The consumer boycott is the individual and group effort to boycott companies and Israeli products. This also includes boycotting companies who openly support Israeli policy, and boycotting products made both in Israel and in the illegal settlements of the West Bank. Numerous campaigns against companies complicit in Israeli war crimes have been successful and bold moves by activists worldwide continue to put pressure on the state to end its disregard for human rights. Companies targeted include (but are not limited to): **H&M, Hewlett-Packard, Motorola, Chapters/Indigo, Estee Lauder, AHAVA, SodaStream, Carmel-Agrexco (recently bankrupted), and Sabra.**

See The Veritas Papers Addendum: Companies to Boycott for more.



DIVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS

The divestment and sanctions campaigns encourage companies to completely divest from its Israeli counterparts, and to sanction Israel until demands to justice are met. The ultimate aim is to economically and socially isolate Israel using a strategic form of resistance.

IS THE BOYCOTT EFFECTIVE?

The simple answer is yes! The strongest evidence for this lies in the very fact that Israel itself sees the boycott movement as a huge threat. Although the BDS movement has a long way to go in terms of stunting Israel's economic growth, strong

and hot opposition to the BDS movement has come directly from the Israeli government, proving that the movement is **making its mark**.

Several campuses and companies have divested from Israel or stopped carrying Israeli products once mounted pressure has been put. In fact, Agrexco, one of Israel's largest exporters recently went bankrupt, and the boycott was arguably a contributing factor. The Methodist Church and several co-ops have passed motions supporting the boycott. Hampshire College successfully divested, and while a motion was passed to divest from Israel at UC-Berkeley, the motion was vetoed undemocratically. On the cultural boycott front, several artists have refused to play in the illegal settlements, demanding that Israel end its occupation. Many actors and writers have also openly endorsed the boycott including the famous Viggo Mortensen (aka. Aragorn). For more famous people who support the call, see **The Veritas Paper** addendum: *Famous people and things that support Palestine*.

MORE INFORMATION



For more information on the boycott campaign, its history, and its official call, visit the official website of the International BDS Movement:

www.bdsmovement.net

To research companies complicit in Israeli war crimes, see: www.whoprofits.org

For a list of companies to boycott in the consumer campaign, please see *The Veritas Papers* addendum: *Companies to Boycott*.



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