



## Fact Sheet – The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement

*“Mellifluous talks of democracy and rights and justice masks the B.D.S objective that is nothing other than the end of the Jewish state for which the United Nations gave an unambiguous mandate in 1947.*

*The movement’s anti-Zionism can easily be a cover for anti-Semitism.”*

– Roger Cohen, [“The B.D.S. Threat,”](#) *The New York Times*, February 10, 2014

### About the BDS Movement

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement is an international anti-Israel movement that seeks to delegitimize and ultimately destroy the State of Israel through the use of political and economic warfare and [false accusations](#). [The BDS movement](#) is made up of dozens of NGOs and radical activists around the world, created following a Palestinian civil society “call for a campaign of boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it [sic] complies with international law and Palestinian rights,” in 2005, according to the group. The first “Palestinian BDS Conference” was held in 2007 in Ramallah, giving birth to the [BDS National Committee](#), comprised of a number of anti-Israel groups, to serve as the “Palestinian coordinating body” for a global BDS campaign.

The BDS movement calls for a [boycott](#) of the State of Israel until Israel: 1) Ends its “occupation and colonization of all Arab lands occupied in June 1967...” 2) Recognizes “the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality”; and 3) Promotes the “rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties...” The three calls are based on myths disseminated by anti-Israel activists. Israel never “occupied” or colonized any Arab lands; Israel obtained control over Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) after fighting a war of extermination launched against the State by its Arab neighbors. Arab-Israeli citizens share the same rights as all other citizens of Israel, including the right to vote, freedoms of religion, speech and assembly, and more. The so-called “right of return” for “Palestinian refugees” is a myth that has been propagated by anti-Israel activists for decades. According to [UN Resolution 194](#), Arabs are not specifically mentioned as the refugees that may return to Israel, nor is the right unconditional; the resolution states that refugees must be willing to live in peace with their neighbors and compensation should be paid by the “governments or authorities responsible” – in this case, the onus falls on the seven Arab countries that invaded Israel after it became a State.

### Tactics of the BDS Movement

BDS activists around the world – including university students, businesses, banks, and others – utilize the following the tactics to attempt to delegitimize and undermine Israel’s existence as a sovereign state:

- BDS activists advocate for the [boycott](#) of Israeli products, goods, and even culture. They do so by encouraging others not to purchase Israeli products or support Israeli artists, and lobbying stores not to carry Israeli products or calling on musicians not to appear in Israel.

- BDS activists also advocate for [divestment](#) from companies that conduct business with Israel by falsely accusing such companies as complicit in “Israeli war crimes.” Activists also lobby investors to withdraw their money and support from companies and organizations that have any connections or ties with Israel.
- BDS activists call on the international community to enact [sanctions](#) against Israel.
- BDS also utilizes the tactic of [anti-normalization](#) to promote the notion that Israel is not a “normal” country and thus should not be treated as such. Supporters of anti-normalization argue that Palestinians and Israelis should not interact, do business with each other, or work towards peace. The anti-normalization narrative of the BDS movement fundamentally opposes any peace process and seeks to completely delegitimize Israel. This often results in attempts by BDS activists to shut-down free speech that relates to Israel.

### **The Extremist Objectives of the BDS Movement**

- The BDS movement uses boycotts, divestments, and sanctions as tools to launch political and economic warfare against Israel with the ultimate goal of eliminating the Jewish State. Its campaigns hold Israel to a double standard, and seek to delegitimize and demonize Israel, and are often [anti-Semitic in nature](#).
- The BDS movement [accuses](#) Israel of denying Palestinian rights through “ethnic cleansing, [and] colonization...” and [refers](#) to Israelis as “Nazis;” these are false allegations that fall under the State Department’s [definition of anti-Semitism](#).
- Omar Barghouti, co-founder of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), and one of the main leaders of the BDS movement, [said](#), “We oppose a Jewish state in any part of Palestine...no Palestinian will ever accept a Jewish State.” Barghouti’s reference to “Palestine” not only refers to Judea and Samaria (the West Bank), but to all of the land of the State of Israel. Barghouti’s PACBI group is a [subdivision](#) of the BDS movement.
- One BDS activist [explained](#) that “the real aim of BDS is to bring down the state of Israel.” He added, “Justice and freedom for the Palestinians are incompatible with the existence of the state of Israel.”

### **BDS on American College Campuses**

- BDS campaigns have become very [popular at college campuses](#) across America, and are oftentimes used by [anti-Israel student groups](#) to isolate and delegitimize the State of Israel, as well as by [some academics](#) and [academic associations](#).
- The most common BDS initiative on campuses is to encourage universities to [divest from companies](#) that “profit from” Israel’s “occupation” or “apartheid” by introducing divestment resolutions within student governments.
- In 2016 thus far, 11 US universities [passed](#) divestment resolutions.
- During the 2015-2016 academic year, a number of university departments have [sponsored or cosponsored](#) programs promoting BDS campaigns, [including some university departments](#) funded by the Department of Education under Title VI of the Higher Education Opportunity Act.
- In the U.S., [more than 1,000 scholars](#) on more than 300 college and university campuses across the country have endorsed an academic boycott of Israel.

- At least [11 American academic organizations](#), including the [American Studies Association](#) (ASA), the [Association for Asian American Studies](#), and the [Native American and Indigenous Studies Association](#), have endorsed an academic boycott of Israel.
- On September 8, 2015, Barghouti [spoke](#) at UC Berkeley about why academics should support a boycott of Israel, and [stated](#) that his PACBI group has been successful in “spreading the academic boycott to U.S. academic associations.”
- During the 2014-2015 academic school year, [nineteen campuses](#) held votes on anti-Israel divestment resolutions or referenda (none of which are binding nor will change university policy). These initiatives create a hostile environment for Jewish students and often [correspond](#) to anti-Semitic activity on campuses.
- Divestment resolutions offer anti-Israel activists a platform to [demonize the Jewish State](#) and intimidate pro-Israel students.
- BDS activity on campuses, including anti-Israel divestment resolutions and opposing Israel’s right to exist, is also contributing to the rise of anti-Semitism on campuses, according to [reports produced](#) by the AMCHA Initiative.
- The radical student group Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), which has more than 100 chapters across the U.S., is the most active voice in support of the BDS movement on campuses. Since its [inception](#), SJP chapters have campaigned for divestment from Israel, which it calls an “[apartheid state](#),” and accuses of “ethnic cleansing.”
- SJP receives support from the pro-BDS, anti-Israel organization, American Muslims for Palestine (AMP). “AMP is arguably the most important sponsor and organizer for Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), which is the most visible arm of the BDS campaign on campuses in the United States. AMP provides speakers, training, printed materials, a so-called “Apartheid Wall,” and grants to SJP activists,” according to Dr. Jonathan Schanzer’s April 16, 2016 [Congressional Testimony](#). The Testimony also reveals that part of AMP’s leadership includes individuals that worked for organizations that were designated, dissolved, or held civilly liable by federal authorities for supporting Hamas.

### **Congressional Action Against the BDS Movement**

- The [American Studies Association](#) (ASA) voted to boycott Israeli academic institutions, prompting 134 members of Congress to [denounce](#) the decision in a January 2014 [letter](#) to the ASA president, calling the boycott a “morally dishonest double standard.”
- On June 16th, 2015, Congressman Carlos Curbelo introduced [bipartisan legislation](#) (H. Res. 318) which condemns college policies that call for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions or scholars by institutions of higher learning or scholarly associations.
- On June 29 2015, the President [signed into law](#) the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) bill, which conditions any free trade agreement with the European Union on its rejection of BDS. The anti-BDS measure was originally a stand-alone legislation introduced in the House by Rep. Peter Roskam (R-IL) and Rep. Juan Vargas (D-CA), and was [incorporated](#) into TPA by the House and Senate unanimously in April.
- The Subcommittee on National Security of the House Committee on Government Oversight and Reform [held a hearing](#) on the impact of the BDS movement on July 28, 2015. During the hearing, the CEO of SodaStream International, Daniel Birnbaum, [testified](#) “It [BDS] is an anti-Semitic

Israel-hating organization that is using the Palestinians as a proxy to achieve its vicious goal and bring an end to the Jewish State.”

- On July 29, 2015 Rep. Ed Royce (R-TX) and Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY) [introduced legislation](#) (H. Res. 402) to call on the Administration to increase the use of its voice in international organizations to actively oppose politically motivated acts of BDS against Israel, and support efforts by State legislatures to enact measures that oppose politically motivated acts of BDS.
- On Dec. 11, 2015, the House [passed](#) the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act, H.R. 1907, which includes anti-BDS provisions authored by Rep. Peter Roskam (R-IL) that state Congress’s opposition to BDS, protect American companies that do business in Israel, and calls on the President to provide Congress with an annual, comprehensive report on the BDS movement.
- On Dec. 17, 2015, Representatives Nita Lowey (D-NY), Peter Roskam (R-IL), Eliot Engel (D-NY), and Ed Royce (R-CA) introduced a resolution (H.Res. 567) opposing new guidelines issued by the European Commission to start labeling certain Israeli products imported into European Union countries as “product from the West Bank (Israeli settlement).”
- On Feb. 1 2016, Senator Tom Cotton (R-AK) introduced a bill (S. 2474) to rescind President Obama's recent policy requiring a special label to be placed on Israeli goods produced in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, stating that this directive "plays right into the hands of those who are driving insidious efforts to boycott Israeli goods.”
- On Feb. 10 2016, Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Representatives Robert Dold (R-IL) and Juan Vargas (D-CA ) [simultaneously introduced](#) the Combating BDS Act of 2016 (S. 2531 and H.R. 4514). This act authorizes state and local governments to divest their assets from, or prohibit investment in, organizations that have been credibly determined to engage in BDS against Israel. It also prohibits anyone from bringing legal action against an organization solely because of such divestment. The content of the act was also included in the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 2017, (S.3117) which was [introduced](#) by Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) on June 29, 2016.
- On Feb. 24, 2016, the President signed into the law the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015, which includes the anti-BDS provisions authored by Rep. Peter Roskam (R-IL) and that were passed in the House on 12/11/15.
- On November 14, 2016, U.S. Representatives Peter Roskam (R-IL) and Juan Vargas (D-CA) introduced the [Protecting Israel Against Economic Discrimination](#) Act to push back against the BDS movement. The bill specifically combats attempts by intergovernmental bodies such as the United Nations to engage in politically-charged economic warfare against Israel. U.S. Senators Rob Portman (R-OH) and Ben Cardin (D-MD) introduced [companion legislation](#) in the Senate.

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