

Student Senate Statement on Palestine and Israel

November 13, 2016

This call to officially support the BDS Movement falls consistent with the Manchester University mission statement: “Manchester University respects the infinite worth of every individual and graduates persons of ability and conviction who draw upon their education and faith to lead principled, productive, and compassionate lives that improve the human condition”ⁱ Support for this movement would affirm our support for the human rights and infinite worth of every individual.

The legacy of Manchester University, home to the first peace studies program in the world, serves as an important reminder to our commitment to justice, peace, and reconciliation. As the university joined the South African Anti-Apartheid Movement, we must also join the Palestinian struggle against the occupation and colonialism in Palestine. As many have stated throughout history, neutrality only supports the oppressor, never the oppressed.

Manchester University Student Senate affirms Palestinian human rights and supports the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement as a form of nonviolent resistance to the Israeli military occupation of Palestine. We urge the administration to divest as much as possible from any company or organization that profits, aids, or is complicit in the human rights violations of the Palestinian population. We also affirm the human rights of the Israeli population, while understanding that we want to address the government sponsored Israeli crimes against the Palestinians and Palestinian citizens of Israel. This call for BDS has even been endorsed by some Israeli organizations such as the *Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions*.

The senators of Manchester University, as elected by the student body, affirm the call from over 170 Palestinian civil society organizations and unions to boycott, divest, and sanction Israel economically until the human rights of the Palestinians are respected and the demands of the BDS Movement are met. The demands of the BDS Movement are as follow:

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
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194

We would like to join ranks with all the other universities that have already endorsed the BDS Movement and disinvestment campaigns. The universities include: ⁱⁱ

Stanford University	Rutgers University
University of California, Davis	University of Chicago
University of California, Berkeley	University of Indianapolis
University of California, Irvine	University of Illinois Chicago
Loyola University Chicago	University of South Florida
University of California, Santa Cruz	San Jose State
University of California, Los Angeles	Earlham College
University of California, Riverside	Princeton University
University of California, San Diego	Columbia University
Wesleyan University	University of Toledo
Northwestern University	DePaul University
Oberlin College	University of New Mexico
Arizona State University	Brown University
Hampshire College	University of Michigan Dearborn
Wayne State University	Evergreen State College

Some of the reasoning behind our decision to endorse the BDS Movement:

- Israel receives \$10.2 million a day in military aid from the United States Government, making a total of \$3.7 billion a year from the United States government alone.ⁱⁱⁱ
- To recognize the 77 UN resolutions specifically addressing Israeli impunity to international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention.^{iv}
- The demolition of 48,488 Palestinian structures since 1967, as well as the fact that 450 structures have been demolished since the beginning of the 2016 calendar year, resulting in the displacement of 514 Palestinians.^v
- The 7,000 Palestinian political prisoners in Israel, of which 700 are under administrative detention, including 3 Palestinian Legislative Council members. We also acknowledge the human rights violations of imprisoning 340 Palestinian children.^{vi}
- “Israel has the dubious distinction of being the only country in the world that systematically prosecutes between 500 and 700 children in military courts each year” (p. 1).^{vii}
- The violation of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention by their continuous construction of the 163 Jewish only settlements and 93 outposts built on illegally confiscated Palestinian land in the West Bank.^{viii}
- The destruction of over 500 Palestinian villages in 1948, that resulted in the expulsion of over 750,000 Palestinians from their home. This systemic and planned ethnic cleansing of Palestine was documented by many including Israeli historians.^{ix}
- The apartheid wall of which 85% was built beyond the green line, creating an open air prison for the Palestinian population within the West Bank.^x
- The siege on Gaza that imprisons 1.8 million Palestinians, of which 50% are under the age of 18.^{xi}

Manchester University Student Senate deplores and condemns the human rights violations against any individual. We especially condemn the systemic violation of human rights as in the case of the Israeli military occupation of Palestine and the continuous illegal annexation of land.

We urge Manchester University administration to avoid purchasing, investing, and aiding as much as possible, any company complicit and profiting from the human rights violations of Israel by adhering to divest from the list of companies as provided in “<http://bdslst.org/full-list/>”.^{xii}

ⁱ <http://www.manchester.edu/about-manchester/mission-and-values>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.endtheoccupation.org/article.php?id=4503>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf>

^{iv} <http://ifamericansknew.org/stat/un.html>

^v <http://icahd.org/> Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions

^{vi} <http://www.addameer.org/statistics>

^{vii} https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/dcipalestine/pages/1525/attachments/original/1460402210/DCIP_NWTTAC_Report_Final_April_2016.pdf No Way to Treat a Child Campaign

^{viii} <http://ifamericansknew.org/stat/settlements.html>

^{ix} <http://www.whale.to/b/Pappe.%20The%20Ethnic%20Cleansing%20of%20Palestine.pdf>

^x <http://muftah.org/israels-apartheid-wall-facts-figures/#.WBvyW1UrKUK>

^{xi} <http://www.ochaopt.org/publications/fact-sheets>

^{xii} <http://bdslst.org/full-list/>