

## Global Jewish Organizations Affirm the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement

*New York, London, Berlin, Tel Aviv (July 17, 2018)* – From South Africa to Sweden, New Zealand to Germany to Brazil, for the first time ever **over thirty Jewish organizations across the globe came together in a [statement](#) condemning attempts to stifle criticism of Israel.**

The statement warns of a growing trend of legislative campaigns to target organizations that support Palestinian rights, particularly the nonviolent Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

*“From our own histories we are all too aware of the dangers of increasingly fascist and openly racist governments and political parties,”* the global letter states. *“The rise in antisemitic discourse and attacks worldwide is part of that broader trend. At times like this, it is more important than ever to distinguish between the hostility to or prejudice against Jews on the one hand and legitimate critiques of Israeli policies and system of injustice on the other.”*

The United States has witnessed increasing legislative efforts to [criminalize the boycott of illegal Israeli settlements](#) and [repress advocacy for Palestinian human rights by defining such acts as antisemitic](#), with two bills currently under discussion in US Congress. Such efforts are [mirrored at the state level](#), where more than 25 state legislatures have considered or enacted various forms of targeting advocacy for Palestinian rights.

Of particular concern is the usage of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance ([IHRA](#)) definition of antisemitism, intentionally worded such that it equates legitimate criticisms of Israel and advocacy for Palestinian rights with antisemitism, as a means to suppress the former.

A similar approach is being employed across Europe. In France and [Germany](#), the bank accounts of BDS groups were closed and campaigns promoting the boycott of goods from illegal Israeli settlements were convicted of incitement to hatred. The [UK](#) has witnessed an ongoing battle about the legality of local government boycotts against Israeli settlements.

The state of Israel has waged its own campaign against advocates of BDS. In January, the Israeli Ministry of Strategic Affairs announced a [ban](#) prohibiting the leaders of 20 organizations worldwide from entering Israel, including Jewish Voice for Peace, for supporting BDS. And in 2015, the [Israeli High Court upheld a law](#) which allows individuals to sue individuals calling for a boycott of Israel or of companies profiting from illegal Israeli settlements.

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As social justice organizations from around the world, we write this letter with growing alarm regarding the targeting of organizations that support Palestinian rights in general and the nonviolent Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions ([BDS](#)) movement, in particular. These attacks too often take the form of cynical and false accusations of antisemitism that dangerously conflate anti-Jewish racism with opposition to Israel’s policies and system of occupation and apartheid.

We live in a frightening era, with growing numbers of authoritarian and xenophobic regimes worldwide, foremost among them the Trump administration, allying themselves with Israel’s far right government while making common cause with deeply antisemitic and racist white supremacist groups and parties.

From our own histories we are all too aware of the dangers of increasingly fascistic and openly racist governments and political parties. The rise in antisemitic discourse and attacks worldwide is part of that broader trend.

At times like this, it is more important than ever to [distinguish](#) between the hostility to or prejudice against Jews on the one hand and legitimate critiques of Israeli policies and system of injustice on the other.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) [definition](#) of antisemitism, which is increasingly being adopted or considered by western governments, is worded in such a way as to be easily adopted or considered by western governments to intentionally equate legitimate criticisms of Israel and advocacy for Palestinian rights with antisemitism, as a means to suppress the former.

This conflation undermines both the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice and equality and the global struggle against antisemitism. It also serves to shield Israel from being held accountable to universal standards of human rights and international law.

We urge our governments, municipalities, universities and other institutions to reject the IHRA definition and instead take effective measures to defeat white supremacist nationalist hate and violence and to end complicity in Israel's human rights violations. Israel does not represent us and cannot speak for us when committing crimes against Palestinians and denying their UN-stipulated rights.

The Nobel Peace Prize-nominated, Palestinian civil society-led BDS movement for Palestinian rights has demonstrated an ongoing proven [commitment](#) to fighting antisemitism and all forms of racism and bigotry, consistent with its dedication to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Some of the undersigned organizations support BDS in full, others in part, and others have no formal position on BDS. We all affirm the current call for BDS as a set of tools and tactics that should not be defined as antisemitic.

*Signed:*

Academia4equality (Israel)

Arbeter Ring/Workmen's Circle, Southern California

Boycott from Within (Israeli citizens for BDS)

Coalition of Women for Peace (Israel)

Collectif Judéo Arabe et Citoyen pour la Palestine (France)

Dayenu: New Zealand Jews Against Occupation (New Zealand)

Een Ander Joods Geluid (A Different Jewish Voice) (The Netherlands)

Een Andere Joodse Stem – Another Jewish Voice (Flanders, Belgium)

European Jews for a Just Peace

Free Speech on Israel (UK)

Gate48 – critical Israelis in the Netherlands

Independent Jewish Voices (Canada)

Independent Jewish Voices (UK)

International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network

Italian Network of Jews Against the Occupation

Jewish Anti-Fascist Action Berlin (Germany)

Jewish Socialists' Group (UK)

Jewish Voice for Democracy and Justice in Israel/Palestine (Switzerland)

Jewish Voice For Labour (UK)

Jewish Voice for Peace (USA)

Jewish Voice for Peace members in London (UK)

Jews Against Fascism (Australia)

Jews against the Occupation (Australia)

Jews for Justice for Palestinians (UK)

Jews for Palestinian Right of Return (USA)

Jews of Color & Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews in Solidarity w/ Palestine (USA)

Jews Say No! (USA)

JIPF – Judar för Israelisk Palestinsk Fred (Sweden)

Jüdische Stimme für gerechten Frieden im Nahost e.V. (Germany)

Junts, Associació Catalana de Jueus i Palestins (Catalonia, Spain)

Los Otros Judíos (Argentina)

Manchester Jewish Action for Palestine (UK)

Quebrando Muros – Judeus Brasileiros Pela Descolonização da Palestina (Brazil)

Scottish Jews Against Zionism

SEDQ Network- A Global Jewish Network for Justice

South African Jewish Voices for a Just Peace (South Africa)

South African Jews for a Free Palestine (South Africa)

Union des progressistes juifs de Belgique (Saint-Gilles, Belgium)

United Jewish People's Order (Canada)

Union Juive Française pour la Paix (France)

Boston Workmen's Circle, Center for Jewish Culture and Social Justice