



Boycott Divestment Sanctions

The Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC) is a wide coalition of the largest Palestinian mass organizations, trade unions, networks and organizations.

Member organizations:

- Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine
- General Union of Palestinian Workers
- Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions
- Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO)
- Palestinian National Institute for NGOs
- Federation of Independent Trade Union
- Palestine Right of Return Coalition
- Occupied Palestine and Golan Heights Initiative
- General Union of Palestinian Women
- Union of Palestinian Farmers
- Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (STW)
- The National Committee for Popular Resistance
- Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)
- National Committee to Commemorate the Nakba
- Civic Coalition for the Defense of Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem (CCDPRJ)
- Coalition for Jerusalem
- Union of Palestinian Charitable Organizations
- Palestinian Economic Monitor
- Union of Youth Activity Centers- Palestine Refugee Camps

Press Release

BNC Warmly Welcomes PGFTU's Statement Confirming Unambiguous Endorsement of BDS

1 December 2009

The Palestinian BDS National Committee, BNC, warmly welcomes the statement issued on 25 November 2009 by the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) -- signed by its Secretary General, Mr. Shaher Sa'ad, and its Executive Committee, and endorsed by all the main Palestinian trade union blocs that are represented in the Federation. In particular, the BNC welcomes PGFTU's affirmation of its "principled and committed position for the boycott of Israel" and its praise of international trade unions and other civil society organizations that stand in solidarity with Palestinian rights and adopt the boycott against Israel.

We are further encouraged by PGFTU's commitment to remaining a "key and authentic component" of the large civil society coalition that leads the global BDS movement, the BNC.

While Mr. Sa'ad himself signed PGFTU's endorsement of the BDS Call when it was first launched on 9 July 2005, this new statement by the leadership of PGFTU confirms the Federation's unqualified commitment to BDS in the struggle "to accomplish the national [Palestinian] tasks, at the forefront of which is putting an end to the Israeli occupation and colonization and establishing an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital and with the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes from which they were expelled," as the Federation's just-released statement affirms.

All three Palestinian trade union federations -- the General Union of Palestinian Workers (a constituent mass organization of the PLO), PGFTU and the Palestinian Federation of Independent Trade Unions -- have endorsed BDS against Israel and have been part of the BNC since its inception. This has provided a unified Palestinian labor voice in support of boycotting Israel until it ends its three-tiered oppression of the Palestinian people: its occupation and colonization of the 1967 occupied territory; its institutionalized system of racial discrimination, or apartheid; and its denial of the UN-sanctioned rights of the Palestinian refugees, especially their right to return to their homes of origin.

Despite this complete unity behind BDS, Zionist media outlets as well as Israel lobby groups in the West have launched a campaign of deception and disinformation, using unofficial utterances by this or that Palestinian trade union official to claim that part of the Palestinian trade union movement was unenthusiastic about the boycott or, worse yet, in favor of normal relations with Israel and its complicit institutions. This *hasbara* was most vigorous in the UK, where well-oiled pressure groups, like Trade Union Friends of Israel (TUFID), kept the fraud going and tried to influence major trade unions not to support BDS. With the truth finally being revealed about Israel's war crimes, apartheid

and colonial policies, however, motions supporting BDS were passed with overwhelming majorities in the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the Scottish Trade Union Congress, several major British unions and, finally, the British Trades Union Congress (TUC), leaving the Israel trade union lobby in tatters, facing imminent collapse. With the steady and remarkable spread of BDS among major labor unions across the World, the Israel lobby has evidently reached a level of despair that is compelling it to intensify its reliance on fabrications, intimidation and outright lies in its abortive attempts to hinder the growth of the boycott.

In the latest fatal blow to whatever credibility these Israel lobby groups may still have had in some trade unions, PGFTU's Secretary General himself accused TUCI of fabricating or misrepresenting the statement they attributed to him in a Jewish Chronicle article on November 12, in which he allegedly distanced the Federation from BDS. The BNC and the Palestinian labor movement afterwards strongly urged PGFTU to issue an official statement committing itself to the BDS campaign and thus putting an end to all the rumors and innuendo spread by the Zionist lobby in the West that shed any doubt on PGFTU's commitment to the boycott. By issuing this recent, clearly-worded statement, PGFTU has confirmed that it not only unequivocally supports the boycott against Israel but that it also still considers itself an integral part of the BDS campaign leadership, the BNC.

The Palestinian labor movement has never been as united as it is today in supporting the boycott against Israel and calling on all international trade unions and trade union federations to endorse BDS as the most effective form of solidarity with the people of Palestine in general and our working class in particular. Furthermore, we repeat our appeal to all international trade unions to sever their links with the Histadrut, a racist organization that has always played a key role in perpetuating Israel's occupation, colonization and system of racial discrimination, and that has justified and applauded Israel's war crimes in Gaza in December 2008 and January 2009.

As the struggle against apartheid in South Africa has shown, effective and consistent international solidarity with an oppressed people is best expressed in forms that the oppressed themselves call for. Since 2005, Palestinian civil society, including its trade union federations and all the trade union political blocs, has been united in calling on people of conscience and institutions around the world, particularly trade unions, to endorse BDS against Israel and to implement the boycott in diverse ways that best suit their respective contexts. BDS remains our best hope to end Israel's occupation and apartheid and to attain our UN-recognized rights, particularly our right to self determination.

The Palestinian Civil Society BDS National Committee (BNC)