

Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS)

Aligned with International Law and Canadian foreign policy

BDS is a democratic, non-violent, international movement to pressure Israel economically to respect the human rights of Palestinians. As described below, its three demands align fully with both international law, and Canada's official policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

International Law

- "Emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security... Affirms that the fulfilment of [UN] Charter principles requires the... Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict." *UNSC Resolution 242 (1967)*
- "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." *4th Geneva Convention, Art. 49 p.6*
- Israel must dismantle its Wall, and pay reparations to the Palestinians whose rights and property were impacted as a result of it. *ICJ Advisory Opinion on Israel's Wall (2004), pp. 149-154*

- "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty." *Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 2*

- "(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state, (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country." *Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 13*
- It is forbidden to prevent civilian populations the right to return to their homes following the end of armed conflict. *4th Geneva Convention, Art. 45, 46, 49*

The demands of BDS*

#1

Ending [Israel's] 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, and

#3

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

Official Canadian Policy

- "Canada does not recognize permanent Israeli control over territories occupied in 1967 (the Golan Heights, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip)..."
 - "As referred to in UN Security Council Resolutions 446 and 465, Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention."
 - "Canada opposes Israel's construction of the barrier [i.e. Wall] inside the West Bank and East Jerusalem which are occupied territories... Canada not only opposes Israel's construction of a barrier extending into the occupied territories, but also expropriations and the demolition of houses and economic infrastructure carried out for this purpose."
- Global Affairs Canada Website, Canadian Policy on Key Issues of Israeli Palestinian Conflict*

- "Canada has been a consistently strong voice for the protection of human rights and the advancement of democratic values. Canada takes principled positions on important issues to ensure that freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, values that define this country, are enjoyed around the world."
- Global Affairs Canada Website, Human Rights*

- "Canada believes that a just solution to the Palestinian refugee issue is central to a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as called for in United Nations General Assembly resolution 194 (1948) and United Nations Security Council resolution 242. ... This solution should respect the rights of the refugees, in accordance with international law."
- Global Affairs Canada Website, Canadian Policy on Key Issues of Israeli Palestinian Conflict*

* The formal demands of the international BDS movement are documented at <http://bdsmovement.net/call>

Palestinian Human Rights and the BDS Movement

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement was launched in 2005, almost 40 years after Israel began its military occupation of the Palestinian territories. During the intervening 40 years, Israel had ignored 1) the terms of peace accords, 2) dozens of UN resolutions, 3) a scathing decision by the International Court of Justice, and 4) repeated condemnation by international (and Israeli) human rights groups.

Israel's gradual dispossession of Palestinians from 1946 - Present



Map 1: Following World War II, land ownership in Israel-Palestine was roughly 6% Jewish, and 94% Palestinian. This, despite massive emmigration by Jews to the region in the decades prior.

Map 2: The UN Partition Plan of 1947 allocated 53% of the land to a Jewish-majority state, and 47% of the land to a Palestinian-majority state. At this time, the Jews only represented 33% of the population of Israel-Palestine. Western countries voted in support of the Plan, while almost all Asian and African countries voted against it.

Map 3: In the armed conflict of 1948, Israel defeated its opponents, and seized vast amounts of land intended for the Palestinian-majority state. At least 700,000 Palestinians became refugees between 1947-1949, yet Israel has never permitted these refugees to return. In 1967, Israel invaded the West Bank and Gaza, and has militarily controlled these territories ever since.

Map 4: With its military occupation of the West Bank, Israel continues to confiscate land with illegal Jewish-only colonies (a.k.a. "settlements"), Jewish-only roads, "security" zones, and a 700-km. Wall. Palestinians are separated from their lands, their schools, health services, and neighbouring Palestinian communities by what some now call Israel's "matrix of control."

Is BDS anti-Semitic?

No. People and organizations who support BDS do so because they agree with the movement's objectives (see reverse side) as stated at its launch in 2005. The three core objectives of the BDS movement align with International Law and Canada's official policy on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Why is only Israel targeted? Why not other countries?

BDS is a response to an explicit call from the Palestinian people. The BDS movement was launched to help in dealing with Palestinians' biggest problems. It was not intended to solve all the problems of the world.

Does the BDS movement seek to destroy Israel?

No. The BDS movement is supported by many people – including many Jewish-Canadians – who simply want Israeli policies to change, and have no intention of trying to destroy or delegitimize Israel. BDS will come to an end when Israel's human rights abuses end.

Are there alternatives to BDS?

Israel has militarily occupied the West Bank and Gaza since 1967. The BDS movement was only launched in 2005, after decades of less forceful attempts - e.g. UN resolutions, legal decisions, decades of peace negotiations - to persuade the Israeli government to respect Palestinian human rights.