

Statement: Effective BDS actions more important than ever to support Palestinians in Gaza and hold Israel to account

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Occupied Palestine, 10 July – In light of the on-going brutal military assault on Palestinians in Gaza and elsewhere, the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC) calls on supporters of human rights to take effective actions, particularly in the shape of BDS campaigns, to show solidarity and pressure Israel to end its regime of occupation, colonialism and apartheid.

In particular, we urge people of conscience to intensify their pressure on governments to impose a military embargo on Israel and to suspend free trade and bilateral agreements with it until it fulfils its obligations under international law. Governments across the world must be held to account for their complicity with Israeli crimes. As South African Nobel laureate, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, said, “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.”

Exactly ten years ago the International Court of Justice ruled that the international community had a legal obligation to end Israel’s grave breaches of peremptory norms of international law. A decade later, governments continue to enable an environment of Israeli impunity.

This lack of accountability has encouraged Israel to first unleash its racist violence on Palestinians in the West Bank, most notably in Hebron and Jerusalem, and now in Gaza. Since Tuesday, Israel’s occupation forces have killed more than 80 Palestinians and injured hundreds in the occupied and besieged Gaza Strip. Israel’s indiscriminate air, land and sea bombing of the world’s most densely populated zone, which has annihilated whole families and devastated civilian homes and infrastructure, amounts to war crimes and possible crimes against humanity.

Our people in Gaza hold are steadfastly holding against one of the most powerful armies in the world, and Palestinians in the West Bank, especially in Jerusalem, and across Israel are rising up in protests against Israel’s unfolding massacre.

Nine years on from the historic Palestinian call for boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS), issued by the overwhelming majority of Palestinian society on July 9 2005, the BDS movement has opened the most crucial and empowering space for effective international solidarity with the Palestinian people’s struggle for freedom, justice and equality.

Significant recent BDS-related developments include:

- The Presbyterian Church (USA) voted to divest its holdings from HP, Motorola Solutions and Caterpillar due to their complicity in the Israeli occupation and denial of Palestinian human rights [1].
- Private security company G4S announced it is considering ending its role in Israel’s prison system after grassroots campaigning cost the company millions of dollars in contracts [2] and persuaded the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation [3] and the United Methodist Church [4] to divest from the

company.

- Dutch pension giant ABP divested from two Israeli arms companies [5], following on from similar decisions by other major institutional investors across Europe and North America.
- Major UK retail chain John Lewis stopped stocking SodaStream [6] and a SodaStream shop in Brighton closed following high profile campaigns over SodaStream's role in illegal settlements in the West Bank and ethnic cleansing in the Naqab desert inside Israel.
- 17 European governments have issued guidance warning businesses to avoid links with illegal Israeli settlements following civil society campaigning [7].

Aware of the way in which BDS is raising awareness of Palestinian rights and eroding the international support on which its impunity depends, Israel today views BDS as a "key strategic threat" to its regime of oppression. Even the White House is now warning that Israel faces increasing isolation.

Grassroots BDS actions and strategically-developed campaigns are therefore urgently needed to hold Israel to account and stop this and future assaults on the Palestinian people in Gaza and elsewhere.

Effective international solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for rights spells BDS!

It is time to end Israel's impunity! Join the BDS movement now! [8]

Mobilize for an immediate military embargo and an end to free trade and bilateral agreements with Israel!

Palestinian BDS National Committee

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<http://www.bdsmovement.net/2014/effective-bds-actions-more-important-than-ever-to-support-palestinians-in-gaza-and-hold-israel-to-account-12235>

Footnotes

[1] <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2014/palestinian-civil-society-salutes-presbyterians-on-divestment-resolution-12177>

[2] <http://www.bdsmovement.net/g4s-timeline>

[3] <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/g4s-end-israel-prison-contracts-pressure-mounts-over-torture-complicity>

[4] https://www.kairosresponse.org/PressRel_UMC_Divests_G4S.html

[5] <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/europe/12548-dutch-pension-fund-abp-divests-from-two-israeli-arms-companies>

[6] [/news/2014/jul/01/ecostream-campaign-victorious](#)

[7] <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2014/17-eu-members-take-action-against-corporate-complicity-12200>

[8] <http://www.bdsmovement.net/get-involved>