BDS 101
Non-Violent Resistance to End Israeli Apartheid and Occupation

Columbia Apartheid Divest
Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine
Columbia/Barnard Jewish Voice for Peace
Who are we?

CU Apartheid Divest is a joint campaign launched by Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine and Columbia/Barnard Jewish Voice for Peace.

We call upon the University to divest its stocks, funds, and endowment from companies that profit from the State of Israel’s apartheid system and military occupation in the Palestinian Territories.

This campaign is embedded in the larger movement seeking Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions from the State of Israel until it complies with international law.
A Brief History of Dispossession

What was Palestine like just before 1946?
In the first half of the 20th century, Palestine was not an autonomous state but was an area under Ottoman rule and then British mandate known as Palestine. What matters is that people -- the majority of them non-Jewish -- lived on that land and had been there for generations, with no particular groups’ rights exclusively prioritized until the foundation of Israel.
A Snapshot of Occupation

Where? West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem

Since 1967, the Israeli military has occupied the Gaza strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. Israel has built 224 Jewish-only settlements in the West Bank and 14 settlements in East Jerusalem, with a total population of over 700,000 settlers. These settlements are in clear violation of international humanitarian law.¹

There are 96 fixed checkpoints in the West Bank, 57 of which are internal. There are also over 350 flying ‘surprise’ checkpoints. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that there are an average of 358 physical obstructions a month that often disrupt the movement of vehicles during emergencies and prevent people from getting to school, jobs, and appointments. Palestinians regularly wait hours to pass.²

Palestinians in the occupied territories live under Israeli military law, which severely restrict movement. Order No. 101 (1967) prohibits “political” gatherings of more than ten people, which functionally disallows non-violent resistance and civil protests. Palestinian non-violent demonstrations in the West Bank are regularly broken up with tear gas and rubber bullets.³

1. “Settlements” (B’Tselem) http://www.btselem.org/settlements
3. OC Central Command Order No. 101 – “Order Regarding Prohibition of Incitement and Hostile Propaganda Actions”
Discrimination by Ethnoreligious Identity

Where? The State of Israel

The foundation of a Jewish State purported equality for all people of the state (Declaration of the Establishment of State of Israel, 1948), but in practice, Jews are undemocratically prioritized at the expense of resident non-Jews. This manifests legally in several ways:

- ID differentiation system: Israeli Jews and Palestinian citizens of Israel have different ID cards, which allow the following discriminatory laws to work
- 1952 Citizenship Law gives automatic citizenship to any Jew but denies right to citizenship for Palestinians who were residents of Palestine pre-1948
- 1953 Jewish National Fund Law: gives the JNF legal authority and tax relief to purchase land for exclusively Jewish use
- 2011 Admissions Law:
  - legalizes the existence of ‘Admissions Committees’ which allow towns in the Naqab/Negev and Galilee to accept or reject individuals from living in these towns...deemed “unsuitable to the... social and cultural fabric”
  - The law authorizes Committees to adopt and implement their own admissions criteria, including those community towns that have defined themselves as having a “Zionist vision”
1951 Refugee Convention: "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

The displaced Palestinian population is at least 7.1 million, 6.6 million of which are refugees, and more than 400,000 are internally displaced persons. Refugees comprise about 67% of the Palestinian population.

Most Palestinian refugees live in camps in the occupied territories and neighboring Arab countries, with more than 2 million registered refugees in Jordan, 1.1 million in Gaza, some 779,000 in the West Bank, 427,000 in Syria (prior to the ongoing civil war), and 425,000 in Lebanon.

Sources:
Article 13(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides: “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.”

The right of return for refugees is a human right that’s internationally recognized.

Palestinians who have attempted to return (particularly since the mass expulsions in 1948) are rejected for “posing a threat” to maintaining the majority Jewish population within Israel. To this day, Israel does not recognize the right of return for refugees, but all Jews can return anytime.

Sources:
Why Apartheid?

Apartheid, defined by the United Nations International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid:

"Inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them.

- Segregation (Article II)
- Expropriation of land (Article II.d)
- Different systems of law for different groups (Article II.c), arbitrary arrest and illegal imprisonment (Article II.a.iii)
- Denial of the right to leave and return to their country (Article II.c)
- Denial of the right to a nationality (Article II.c)
- Denial of the right to freedom of movement and residence (Article II.c)

2011 Admissions Committee Law, also segregated buses and roads in the West Bank settlements

1950 Absentee Property Law and creation of illegal settlements in the West Bank

In the West Bank, Jewish settlers are tried under civil law and can vote. Palestinians cannot vote and live under military law, results in mass arrests and indictment of children and inhumanely long periods of detainment (Caabu 2012, HRW, Unicef)

1950 Law of Return allows automatic return and full citizenship only for Jews, whereas Palestinian refugees expelled in ‘48 are not granted citizenship

2003 Nationality and Entry into Israel Law (Family Unification)

Gazans barred from living outside of Gaza since 2007, West Bank residents can only live in Areas A and B of West Bank (40% of the land) (B’Tselem 2013)
The Apartheid Wall

The apartheid wall is 4 times the length and twice the height of the Berlin Wall.

The wall is supposed to run along the 1949 Armistice line that separates Israel proper from the West Bank (commonly called the Green Line) but instead, much of it runs through the West Bank on Palestinian territory. The construction of the Wall is used as an excuse to “legally” expropriate Palestinian land.¹

In 2004, the International Court of Justice ruled that "the construction of the wall, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law". ²

1. “Is a Fence, is it a wall? No, its a separation barrier.” (Electronic Intifada) https://electronicintifada.net/content/it-fence-it-wall-no-its-separation-barrier/4715
Archbishop Desmond Tutu

● ON BDS
  ○ “Despite what detractors may allege, these students are doing the right thing. They are doing the moral thing. They are doing that which is incumbent on them as humans who believe that all people have dignity and rights, and that all those being denied their dignity and rights deserve the solidarity of fellow human beings.”

● ON THE APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA BOYCOTT MOVEMENT
  ○ “In South Africa, we could not have achieved our freedom and just peace without the help of people around the world through the use of non-violent means, such as boycotts, divestment, encouraged their governments and other corporate actors to reverse decades-long support for the Apartheid regime.”

What is the BDS movement?

BDS is one of the Palestinian community’s coordinated, nonviolent responses to decades of dispossession and discrimination. It is goal-oriented, and focused on securing equal rights -- not “demonization” of Israel.

**History:** Launched by Palestinian civil society in 2005 with 170 Palestinian organizations signing on, the movement calls for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against the State of Israel until it complies with international law and observes Palestinian rights.\(^1\)

**Structure:** Now a global movement, it is coordinated by the Palestinian National BDS Committee, established in 2007.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The movement calls for three basic assurances of human rights:(^2)</th>
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<td><strong>1.</strong> An <strong>end</strong> to the Israeli occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and the <strong>dismantling</strong> of the Wall.</td>
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<td><strong>2.</strong> <strong>Recognition</strong> of the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality.</td>
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<td><strong>3.</strong> <strong>Respect, Protection and Promotion</strong> of the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.</td>
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Sources: 1 and 2. BDSMovement.net, “Introducing the Movement”
Three Functions of BDS

**Boycotting:** Economically, this means avoiding goods made by Israeli or international companies involved in the violation of Palestinian human rights and international law. It also means boycotting Israeli cultural and academic institutions for their complicity in the system of oppression.

**Divesting:** This means pulling out money from corporations that profit from the violation of Palestinian human rights and ensuring that the likes of university investment portfolios and pension funds are not used to finance such companies.

**Implementing sanctions:** This means governments and international institutions should stop business as usual relations with Israel until the country observes international human rights standards. This can be done by refusing Israel’s participation in international forums and calling for embargoes and economic sanctions.
Boycott

- **Consumer**: Refusing to buy goods or use services of Israeli companies or of international companies involved in Israeli policies that violate Palestinian human rights.

- **Academic and Cultural**: Boycott the institutions that uphold Israel as a colonial and apartheid power, and the individuals that officially represent them. This means refusing to participate in academic activities and cultural events carried out in conjunction with the Israeli government or its complicit institutions; refusing to collaborate in academic ventures with Israeli universities; and declining Israel’s participation in international venues.

Examples:

- In 2004, The University of Haifa failed to penalize geography Professor Arnon Soffer when he said in regards to Gazan Palestinians: “If we want to remain alive, we will have to kill and kill and kill. All day, every day.”¹

- In 1968, Israeli authorities confiscated 3,345 dunums of Palestinian land in East Jerusalem, a large part of which was then given to Hebrew University to expand its campus. Palestinian families refused to leave their homes but in 1973 the Israeli court ruled in favor of the state and the Palestinians were made to evacuate their homes, in place of which they built dorms.²

Divest

The second component of the movement calls for the withdrawal of stocks and funds from Israeli and multinational corporations complicit in the violation of international law and Palestinian rights.

Who can divest? Churches, unions, universities, local authorities and pension funds. These are institutions in which members have a significant influence on investment decisions, as the history of student activism at Columbia has shown.

What to divest from? Most divestment campaigns target companies indisputably implicated in violations of international law in the occupied Palestinian territories. Although the occupation is the most visible demonstration of Israel’s violation of Palestinian rights, the structure of oppression is maintained by non-military institutions as well. Banks, for example, facilitate, finance, and entrench the occupation and wider violation of Palestinians’ right to an equal humanity, and can therefore also be subject to divestment efforts.
Sanction

The third component of the movement calls for states and global institutions to apply sanctions against Israel in order to sever military, economic, and diplomatic links until Israel complies with international law and Palestinian rights.

For example,

- Venezuela, Bolivia, Mauritania, Niger, Tunisia, Morocco, and Oman have severed diplomatic relations with Israel.¹

- In 2009, the Parliament of Chile voted, with a large majority, to boycott Israeli products originating from the colonial settlements.²

- In 2010, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled that Israeli products produced in the West Bank: “do not qualify for preferential customs”³ and, just recently, in November 2015, the EU has decided that Israeli products originating from the West Bank must be explicitly labeled as such.⁴

**Why BDS as a strategy?**

1. Self-determination: it is the request and project of Palestinian activists and Palestinian civil society.¹
2. It follows in the legacy of similar actions taken by the international community against apartheid South Africa. Civil rights movements must involve struggle, and the struggle reflects the seriousness and urgency of the situation.
3. Its mounting success in recent years (especially drops in foreign direct investment) has proved it to be the most effective way for the international community and for conscientious individuals to engage in the non-violent struggle for Palestinian rights.
4. BDS does not prevent diplomatic proceedings between the stakeholders in the occupation and apartheid; rather, it allows outsiders to peacefully demand change and to exert international pressure.

Sources:
1. “Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS.” BDS Movement. [http://bdsmovement.net/call](http://bdsmovement.net/call)
Successes of the BDS movement

State Support
- In 2014, the African National Congress -- the governing party of South Africa -- declared support for BDS.¹

Boycott
- In April 2009, in the aftermath of the Israeli assault on Gaza the previous winter, the Israel Manufacturers Association reported that 21% of local exporters who were questioned had felt a drop in demand due to boycotts.²
- Dockworkers in Sweden, India, Turkey, South Africa, and the United States, boycotted the loading and unloading of Israeli ships to protest Israel’s attack on a Turkish flotilla headed to Gaza in 2010.³

Divestments
- Foreign direct investment in Israel dropped by 46% in 2015, and the UN Conference on Trade and Development report-writers believe the drop came as a result of BDS and Israel’s Operation Protective Edge against Gaza in 2014.⁴
- In 2009, Hampshire College divested from companies that aid Israel’s military occupation.
- Since then, 15 US campuses and 25 UK ones have passed similar resolutions, among them DePaul, Oberlin College, The Evergreen State College, Loyola University, The University of Toledo, Wesleyan University, Stanford University, and six University of California campuses.
- Presbyterian Church USA, United Methodist Church, United Church of Christ have divested.⁵

Real success isn’t more BDS: it’s the end of BDS, with no more occupation and dispossession, right of return for Palestinian refugees, and full equal rights for all people of the land.

Sources:
4. UNCTAD World Investment Report 2015: Israel Fact Sheet
5. BDSMovement.net, “Successes.”
FAQ: Is BDS Anti-Semitic?

No.

This campaign (and BDS) does not target Jews or Israelis generally.

Our campaign targets the companies that enable human rights violations by the state of Israel. More broadly, BDS seeks reforms from institutions that prop up Israel’s system of apartheid.

This campaign seeks to end an ongoing injustice. There is nothing anti-semitic in that. In fact, many of us in JVP understand our activism through Jewish values.
FAQ: Why do you pick on Israel?

This usually means a few different things...

Q: Why do you care about Israel?
A: We are directly implicated -- as Palestinians, Jews, Americans, and CU students.

Q: Why don’t you go do activism around [insert geopolitical issue here]?
A: We stand against injustice everywhere (hence our affiliation with BCSN!). We have chosen to fight this injustice because of our direct implication in it.

Q: But won’t regular Israelis be hurt by this?
A: Our divestment campaign is specific to companies (Israeli and international) that profit from human rights violations -- not Israeli businesses generally. Also, divestment is largely a symbolic gesture.
BDS at Columbia

Columbia University has a long history of working towards ensuring socially responsible investment. It is against this backdrop of our community’s rich history of moral accountability to social, political, and economic justice that CUAD calls for divestment from the State of Israel’s apartheid system and military occupation in the Palestinian Territories.

On October 7th, 1985 Columbia University became the first Ivy League university to divest from South African Apartheid.

On June 22nd, 2015 Columbia University became the first university to divest from the private prison industry.

→ Spring semester of 2016, Columbia Apartheid Divest launches with the goal of university endowment divestment from 8 companies that profit from the Israeli occupation and military engagement in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
Targets of Divestment

HYUNDAI Heavy Industries Co., Ltd.
Elbit Systems
CAT
Hewlett Packard Enterprise
BOEING
MEKOROT
Bank Hapoalim
LOCKHEED MARTIN
Hyundai Heavy Industries

- Contracts with Israeli company Automotive Equipment Group to provide Robex 320 LC-7, 320 LC-9, 290 LC-9, and 450 LC-3 excavators\(^1\)
- This model of excavators has been used to extra-legally demolish Palestinian homes\(^1\)

1 - http://www.whoprofits.org/company/hyundai-heavy-industries
● Supplies the IDF with wheel loaders, armored excavators, D9 bulldozers, and other heavy equipment¹

● Equipment used to extra-legally demolish Palestinian homes, erect illegal settlements, build Apartheid Wall and military checkpoints¹,²,³

● Rachel Corrie, American activist, was killed by a Caterpillar bulldozer while protesting illegal demolition of a Palestinian home⁴

¹ - http://www.whoprofits.org/company/caterpillar
⁴ - https://ccrjustice.org/home/what-we-do/our-cases/corrie-et-al-v-caterpillar

Image: http://khamakarpress.com/2015/05/12/
● Supplies the IDF with C130, F-16 and F-35 warplanes, radars, rockets, and rocket guidance systems (Multiple Launch Rocket System)¹

● Equipment used to target Palestinian civilians in Operation Cast Lead² (2008-09) and Operation Protective Edge (2014)³

● Opened an R&D facility in Be’er Sheva in 2014⁴

● Are contracted to provide the IDF with new planes through 2018¹

2 - http://imeu.org/article/operation-cast-lead

Supplies the IDF with F-15 Eagle fighter jets, AH-64 Apache and Chinook CH-47 helicopters, Arrow 2 and 3 missiles, missile guidance systems, and other heavy munitions¹

UN commissions have reported the use of Boeing equipment to commit human rights violations and war crimes in Lebanon, Gaza, and the West Bank²,³,⁴

Boeing Apaches were observed firing on civilians during Operation Cast Lead³

³ - http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/12session/A-HRC-12-48.pdf
⁴ - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/apr/14/israel
Image: http://www.cavok-aviation-photos.net/Ramon/AH64D_736.jpg
● Developed “Torch” sensors used at the Apartheid Wall

● Elbit’s Skylark and Hermes 900 drones are used by the IDF military campaigns against Gaza and arrest campaigns in the West Bank

● Share price jumped 8.4% in July, 2014 during Operation Protective Edge

1 - http://www.eccpalestine.org/eu-research-funding-and-israeli-violations-of-international-law/#sthash.q74Z5lOU.dpuf
2 - http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2009/06/30/precisely-wrong-0#sthash.q74Z5lOU.dpuf
3 - http://whoprofits.org/company/elbit-systems
4 - http://www.nasdaq.com/symbol/eslt/stock-chart
Hewlett Packard Enterprise

- Develops, supplies, and maintains the BASEL biometric identification system used at IDF checkpoints in the Occupied Territories
- Provide IT infrastructure and support to Israel Prison Service
- Have contracts to provide information technology infrastructure to illegal settlements of Modi’in Ilit and Ariel
- Have a “development center” in another illegal settlement, Beitar Illit

1 - http://www.whoprofits.org/company/hewlett-packard-hp
3 - https://nebula.wsimg.com/21998449623e4a7618ae92278f7f7a47AccessKeyId=7BB3DAA86ABC0388A877&disposition=0&alloworigin=1
Bank Hapoalim

- Finances construction of illegal settlements in the West Bank by underwriting construction\(^1,2\) companies and selling mortgages
- Provides financial services to settlers in West Bank\(^2\)
- Discriminates against Israeli Arabs by refusing to transfer funds to accounts in areas in Israel populated by Jews\(^3\)
- January 2016: United Methodist Church divests from Hapoalim and 4 other Israeli banks\(^4\)

1 - http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.571849
2 - http://www.whoprofits.org/company/hapoalim-bank
- Israeli utility that controls water access in Israel, Gaza, the West Bank, and Golan Heights
- With IDF, demolishes Palestinian irrigation systems in the West Bank\(^1\)
- During droughts, restricts water to Palestinians but meets needs of settlements\(^2\)
- Palestinians have access to 70\(^3,4\) liters/day per capita; World Health Organization recommends 100\(^3,4\); Israelis receive 300\(^4\)

1 - http://www.ewash.org/wash-in-opt/west-bank
3 - http://www.btselem.org/water/discrimination_in_water_supply
4 - https://www.amnestyusa.org/pdf/mde150272009en.pdf

Palestinian town
Near Bil'in
Image: Julia Peck
January 2014
Columbia Apartheid Divest
Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine
Columbia/Barnard Jewish Voice for Peace

Q&A