

IP-10: Palestinian Liberation Issues Policy

Preamble

Palestinian liberation refers to the effort to overcome Israeli settler colonialism and end the decades-old occupation within Historic Palestine, which includes the '48 territories (the present-day State of Israel), the West Bank, and Gaza.

The State of Israel was built through the dispossession and ethnic cleansing of more than 700,000 Palestinians from their homes, villages, and lands. Since 1948, the State of Israel has been occupying and colonizing Palestinian land, discriminating against Palestinians across the entirety of Palestine as well as displacing and denying the right of return to more than 7 million Palestinian refugees across the world. Israeli expulsion and colonialism are at the core of Palestinian experience, especially in reference to Palestinian refugees and the right of return.

Israel enforces its settler-colonial regime of occupation through forced expulsions, dispossessions, and ethnic cleansing, activities used to eradicate the Indigenous population. Ethnic cleansing is [defined](#) as *“rendering an area ethnically homogeneous by using force or intimidation to remove persons of given groups from the area, a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic group from certain geographic areas.”* This state of oppression has been reinforced through discriminatory and colonial policies based on ethnic supremacy for Jewish citizens of Israel. Palestinians at home as well as those living in exile in the diaspora as well as their allies are subject to censorship and doxxing (i.e., posting personal dossiers online and adding names to blacklists like the infamous “Canary Mission”), with devastating effects on their careers, education, and livelihoods, when they attempt to highlight Israeli settler colonialism and Western complicity.

As outlined in the Human Rights Watch report [“A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution,”](#) the B'tselem report [“A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid,”](#) and the Amnesty International report [“Israel’s Apartheid Against Palestinians: A Cruel System of Domination and a Crime Against Humanity,”](#) the State of Israel is in clear violation of international law in its treatment of Palestinian citizens of Israel as well as those living in occupied territories.

The State of Israel violates international humanitarian law and international human rights law; provisions contained in the [Fourth Geneva Convention](#), the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), the [International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid](#), the [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#), and the [Rome Statute](#)

[of the International Criminal Court](#) are regularly breached wherever Israeli civil and military institutions exercise their control.

There have been numerous [UN resolutions](#) denouncing the creation and ongoing expansion of illegal settlements in Occupied Palestine, but these have been ignored by the State of Israel and its international supporters. Governments around the world refuse to hold Israel accountable for these violations. Multinational companies and global institutions assist in the Israeli oppression of Palestinians by ignoring these atrocities and continuing business as usual with Israel. Under the Nuremberg Principles [I](#) and [II](#), individuals are responsible for adhering to the principles of international law. Guided by Nuremberg Principle [VII](#), the Simon Fraser Student Society sees itself obligated to support the Palestinian pursuit of self-determination and to resist the illegal actions of the State of Israel.

Because International law, governments, and other legal apparatuses have steadfastly refused to pursue justice for Palestinians since 2005 Palestinian civil society has called for its supporters to become active in the grassroots Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement as a means of participating in the pursuit of Palestinian liberation.

Forms of Boycott: Academic, Cultural, and Economic

- *Academic Boycott:* Palestinian civil society calls for an academic boycott of Israeli academic institutions complicit in the oppression of Palestinians. Refusing to normalize oppression, many academic associations, student governments, and unions, as well as thousands of international academics, have come out in support of the academic boycott of Israel. In North American campuses, this has taken the form of ending ties with university “Go Global” programs at Tel Aviv or Haifa University.
- *Cultural Boycott:* Israel uses culture as a form of propaganda to whitewash its occupation, settler-colonialism, and the system of apartheid rule over Palestinians. Just as South African anti-apartheid activists called on international artists, writers, and cultural institutions to [culturally boycott South Africa](#), the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) urges international cultural workers and cultural organizations, including unions and associations, to boycott and/or work towards the cancellation of events, activities, agreements, or projects involving Israel, its lobby groups, or its cultural institutions. International venues and festivals are asked to reject funding and any form of sponsorship from the Israeli government. Thousands of artists across the world have refused to perform in Israel, including Roger Waters and Lauryn Hill.
- *Economic Boycott:* International companies aid and abet Israel’s violations of international law, by operating in Israeli settlements and acting as contractors for the Israeli military and government. BDS-based campaigning has led to major companies such as Veolia and Orange selling their Israeli holdings and leaving Israel. A range of investors have divested from Israeli and international companies linked to illegal Israeli settlements, including [112](#) named by the UN.

Both the UN and the World Bank have declared that BDS is having an important economic impact on Israel.

A cultural, academic, or economic boycott does not target anyone based on anything other than being complicit in the oppression of Palestinians. It targets institutions, their partners, and representatives based on their complicity in Israel's violations of international law, and who are clearly implicated, through their silence or active participation, in supporting, justifying, and whitewashing Israel's occupation and systematic denial of Palestinian lands, dignity and rights.

Divestment: To divest is to withdraw funds. International companies such as G4S and HP profit from helping Israel maintain its system of settler colonialism. Divestment campaigns have focused on these and others to put pressure on them to end their complicity with Israeli's oppression of Palestinians.

Sanctions: Sanctions are defined in international law as measures of states against another state which contradict the principle of peaceful cooperation. Sanctions were the final blow to the apartheid regime in South Africa. The BDS movement has called for governments to sanction Israel. Some governments have responded by mounting military embargoes, ending economic links, and cutting diplomatic ties. Sanctions can also include ending all trade with Israeli settlements and the suspension of free trade and other bilateral agreements with Israel.

The BDS movement is built on three demands: 1) Ending Israeli 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.

The Palestinian Liberation Issues Policy provides an opportunity for the SFU community to follow in the footsteps of other leading Canadian academic institutions where their community has supported divestment. In February 2022, the University of Toronto Student Union [passed](#) a motion mandating that it divest from "all firms complicit in the occupation of Palestinian Territory." Two universities in Montreal embraced a similar approach: a 71% majority of the McGill undergraduate student body [voted](#) in favor of a Palestine Solidarity Policy. Concordia University's Student Union has also passed a motion condemning Israeli Apartheid. Additionally, UBC's student union, the AMS, voted in March 2022 to call for UBC to divest itself of holdings in 9 arms manufacturing companies that aid in Israel's oppression of Palestinians and to condemn Israeli apartheid as well as the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Definitions

Zionism: Zionism is a colonial ideology that calls for establishing a Jewish nation-state in Palestine having a Jewish majority and institutionalizing Jewish privilege in Israel. In Palestine, this necessitated first the ethnic cleansing of the Indigenous population during the [1948 Nakba](#) and subsequently maintaining an

apartheid regime. There were few Zionists present in Palestine before the 20th century; creating a Jewish state necessitated the expulsion of the Palestinians and the creation of an apartheid state. Read [more](#) (Note: This article outlines an answer to the myth of Zionism not being a colonialist venture).

Anti-Zionism: Opposition to the establishment and maintenance of a state rooted in Jewish supremacy and colonization of Palestinian land and sustained through home demolitions, checkpoints, imprisonment, segregation, ID system, and overall subjugation of Palestinian life and dignity. Anti-Zionism fits into a wider anti-colonial framework globally, including within Turtle Island.

Anti-Palestinian racism: The Arab Canadian Lawyers Association defines anti-Palestinian racism as “racism involving attacking, smearing, silencing or stereotyping of Palestinians. This racism can be implicit, overt, or systemic and can be perpetrated against Palestinians and non-Palestinians. Anti-Palestinian racism takes various forms, including: violence or the justification of violence against Palestinian lands, property, or persons; failing to acknowledge Palestinians as a people with a collective identity, belonging, and rights in relation to occupied and historic Palestine; excluding or pressuring organizations, governments or individuals to exclude Palestinians or Palestinian perspectives; denying or causing to be denied the human rights and equal dignity and worth of Palestinians; and smearing Palestinians with tropes such as being antisemitic, terrorist sympathizers, or opposed to shared national/democratic values. This also includes denial of the 1948 Nakba and enforcing the Palestinian exception to progressive politics.” Read more [here](#).

Anti-Semitism: Anti-Semitism is racism, hostility, prejudice, vilification, discrimination, or violence, including hate crimes, directed against Jewish people, as individuals, groups, or as a collective, because they are Jewish. Its expression includes attributing to Jewish people, as a group, characteristics or behaviours that are perceived as dangerous, harmful, frightening, or threatening to non-Jewish people. Anti-Semitism should be considered as abhorrent as other forms of racism and discrimination. Unfortunately, defenders of Israel are promoting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism, which is designed to stifle criticism of Israel and of Zionism by wrongly equating it with anti-Semitism. Read more at www.noihra.ca.

The Boycott, Disinvestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement: a non-violent movement formed in 2005 by more than 170 Palestinian non-governmental organizations, unions, and civil society groups aimed to campaign for and protect the rights of Palestinians through the application of international pressure on Israel to compel it to comply with international law.

Policy

1. The SFSS supports:

- a. The liberation and self-determination of Palestinians in their quest for freedom, justice, right to return, and land back, including all forms of resistance in line with international

- law. We shall strive to amplify the efforts of the Palestinian diaspora to bring international pressure on Israel and focus on the lived experience of Palestinians in all of Palestine.
- b. Working with anti-colonial, Palestinian, and anti-Zionist Jewish groups, students, community groups, and grassroots organizations advocating for Palestinian liberation, including workshops, teach-ins, walk-outs, protests, rallies, and other actions via:
 - i. Funding, organizational partnerships, and actions that advance the cause of Palestinian liberation, including calls for boycotting, divesting, and sanctioning the state of Israel and institutions complicit in the oppression of Palestinians.
 - c. The aims of the BDS movement which are:
 - i. End Israeli occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantle [the Wall](#).
 - ii. Recognize the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality.
 - iii. Respect, protect, and promote the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.
 - d. The call for initiatives in support of the BDS movement such as:
 - i. Boycotting the state of Israel and institutions, companies, and organizations that fund or support Israeli apartheid and settlements. This involves withdrawing support from Israel's apartheid regime, complicit Israeli sporting, cultural and academic institutions, and from all Israeli and international companies engaged in violations of Palestinian human rights. This includes an academic boycott of Israeli universities within the guidelines outlined in the [PACBI academic and cultural boycott framework](#).
 - ii. Divesting from the state of Israel by encouraging and urging banks, local municipal councils, religious institutions, pension funds, and universities (including internal and external to SFU) to withdraw investments from the State of Israel, as well as all Israeli and international companies that sustain Israeli apartheid.
 - iii. Sanctioning the state of Israel in order to end its system of apartheid by banning business with illegal Israeli settlements, ending military trade and free-trade agreements, as well as suspending Israel's membership in international fora.

2. SFSS opposes

- a. Laws, policies, and practices that violate international law, such as:
 - i. Divided and separate rule;
 - ii. Israel's discriminatory system of immigration for Jewish peoples only as well as the granting of rights and privileges to Jewish people at the expense of Palestinians;
 - iii. The building of illegal settlements on occupied territories;
 - iv. Restrictions on Palestinians' freedom of movement;
 - v. Limitations on Palestinians' right to political participation;
 - vi. Inhumane acts and abuse of Palestinians' fundamental rights; and

- vii. Institutional discrimination and systemic domination.
- b. Discourse that adopts or promotes anti-Palestinian racism, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous, anti-Arab racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and any form of oppression.
- c. The coopting of the BDS movement to promote or tolerate any act or discourse which perpetuates anti-Palestinian racism, anti-Arab racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, sexism, xenophobia, or homophobia, and zero tolerance on any form of oppression in the name of these policies.
- d. Apartheid, genocide, slavery, colonial exploitation, and ethnic cleansing, or crimes against humanity that are founded on racism and racial supremacy. We support victims, including descendants, right to full reparation.
- e. Partnering with, or empowering groups through representation on decision-making bodies (such as on the SFSS Council) that;
 - i. Censor and suppress actions supporting Palestinians;
 - ii. Foster a repressive environment for members of groups that support Palestinian liberation and human rights, on the basis of their members' support for Palestinians—including using tools such as boycotts, divestments, and sanctions, or;
 - iii. That have ties to or seek to establish, ties with the state of Israel or any institution complicit in its oppression of Palestinians, as guided by this policy.

Relevant Documents

SFSS and SFU Documents

1. SFSS Anti-Racism Issues Policy
2. SFU Human Rights Policy
3. SFU Responsible Investment Policy

Other Documents

4. Decolonize Palestine:
<https://decolonizepalestine.com/intro/palestine-throughout-history/>
5. B'Tselem:
https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid
6. Human Rights Watch - A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution:
https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2021/04/israel_palestine0421_web_0.pdf
7. Israel's apartheid against Palestinians: a cruel system of domination and a crime against humanity - Amnesty International:
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/02/israels-apartheid-against-palestinians-a-cruel-system-of-domination-and-a-crime-against-humanity/>

8. UN International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid:
https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.10_International_Convention_on_the_Suppression_and_Punishment_of_the_Crime_of_Apartheid
9. UN Fourth Geneva Convention: Relative the Protection of Civilians in the Time of War
https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.33_GC-IV-EN.pdf
10. UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
<https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%20999/volume-999-i-14668-english.pdf>
11. UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
https://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ha/cerd/cerd_e.pdf
12. Implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) - Report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/584) [EN/AR]
[https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/implementation-security-council-resolution-2334-2016-report-2#:~:text=In%20its%20resolution%202334%20\(2016,the%20achievement%20of%20the%20two](https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/implementation-security-council-resolution-2334-2016-report-2#:~:text=In%20its%20resolution%202334%20(2016,the%20achievement%20of%20the%20two)
13. Nuremberg Principles I and II and VII
<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=D4D734820B8BA553C12563CD0051C97A>
<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=A2212CF58764AAFAC12563CD0051C985>
<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=316D02C8C319DF26C12563CD0051C9D3>
14. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
<https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/documents/rs-eng.pdf>
15. PACBI academic and cultural boycott framework
<https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi/cultural-boycott-guidelines>
16. UN rights office issues report on business activities related to settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory:
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2018/01/un-rights-office-issues-report-business-and-human-rights-settlements?LangID=E&NewsID=22617>
17. SFSS Statement on the Israeli Colonization of Palestine - Simon Fraser Student Society:
<https://sfss.ca/sfss-statement-on-the-israeli-colonisation-of-palestine/>
18. Our definition of antisemitism — No IHRA | Academic campaign — No IHRA:
<https://www.noihra.ca/academic-campaign>
19. UN RESOLUTION 194
<https://www.unrwa.org/content/resolution-194>
20. Statement on Motion to Support Boycott Divestment and Sanction
<https://www.cfs-fcee.ca/blog/statement-on-motion-to-support-boycott-divestment-and-sanctions-bds-movement>
21. UTSU approves motion to divest from firms 'complicit' in occupation of Palestinian territory
<https://thevarsity.ca/2022/02/21/utsu-approves-motion-to-divest-from-firms-complicit-in-occupation-of-palestinian-territory>

22. McGill undergraduate student body vote in favour of Palestine Solidarity Policy
https://www.instagram.com/p/CbYdHWBv7fF/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
23. Anti-Palestinian Racism: Analyzing the Unnamed and Suppressed Reality
<https://pomeps.org/anti-palestinian-racism-analyzing-the-unnamed-and-suppressed-reality>
24. The Cultural Boycott: Israel vs. South Africa by Omar Barghouti
<http://hyperallergic.com/212014/the-cultural-boycott-israel-vs-south-africa%E2%80%A8>
25. United Nations Human Rights Council lists 112 complicit companies related to illegal Israeli settlements
[Named: 112 companies linked to illegal Israeli settlements by the UN | Middle East Eye](#)
26. Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory
<https://www.icj-cij.org/en/case/131>
27. Anti-Palestinian Racism: Analyzing the Unnamed and Suppressed Reality
<https://pomeps.org/anti-palestinian-racism-analyzing-the-unnamed-and-suppressed-reality>
28. Except for Palestine
<https://stevesalaita.com/except-for-palestine/>