

The Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions Campaign

On 9 July, 2005, more than 170 Palestinian political and civil society organizations called for a broad international boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign similar to that waged against the South African Apartheid regime.

The call was made in light of the lack of Israeli response to hundreds of UN resolutions condemning its colonial and discriminatory policies and Israel's continued construction of the Wall on occupied Palestinian territory despite the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion that the Wall is illegal and must be dismantled. Palestinian groups wrote:

These non-violent punitive measures should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

- ▶ Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;
- ▶ Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
- ▶ Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.

Dozens of international organizations, including churches, unions and universities have taken up this call, raising the issue to the at-



An activist protests the demolition of a house in Silwan. House demolitions are one of the means by which Palestinians continue to be displaced from their land. *Photo by Maan News*

Pamphlet cover: Children parade with a large key representing refugees' keys to their original homes at the annual Nakba commemoration in Bethlehem, May 2003. *Photo by Badil*

tention of their constituencies and supporting it in various ways. The National Boycott Committee was formed in Palestine in early 2008 as a joint effort between all major civil society networks, NGOs and unions.

For more information, see www.bds-palestine.net or www.bdsmovement.net.

Some Advocacy Successes

- ▶ The Palestine 1948 Exhibition at the Tropical Museum in Amsterdam demonstrates how the Palestinian refugee issue can be highlighted (<http://www.tropenmuseum.nl>)
- ▶ The BDS campaign is a major part of the right of return movement. Some of its successes include boycott resolutions from the Congress of South African Trade Unions, CUPE Ontario in Canada, the Irish Trade Union Congress, the Association of Univer-

sity Teachers in the UK, the United Methodist Church in the USA, and the Dutch ASN Bank divestment from Veolia Transport corporation for its undertaking to build the tramway between Jerusalem and Israeli settlements.

- ▶ Successes have been achieved in domestic legal systems, such as charging Israeli military officials with war crimes (ex. Doron Almog who was unable to enter the UK as a result), and the case in France against Veolia.
- ▶ Mass petitions (such as the recent one calling for a boycott of Israel at 60 celebrations) as well as statements signed by well-known personalities affirming Palestinian refugee rights are important advocacy successes, as are instances of celebrities rejecting invitations to events that legitimize Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestine.
- ▶ For news of the ongoing campaign, visit: www.badil.org, www.pacbi.org, www.stopthewall.org, <http://www.bds-palestine.net>.

Defending Refugee Rights

What can you do?



Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights



The first step in reaching a just and durable solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons is to build public awareness and pressure. Outside of Palestine, far too little is known and understood about the Nakba and Israeli policies that are forcefully displacing Palestinians.

“The Dance of Return” performed by al-Funoun al-Sha’abi at the al-Awda Award Festival held in Ramallah on May 2007. Photo by Nathalie Bardou



It is important to emphasize that Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons have the right, as do other displaced persons, to see justice through reparations. Reparations include return, restitution of property and compensation for losses. Such measures have been key to resolving conflict in the Balkans, post-Apartheid South Africa, and outstanding World War II claims. To continue to allow the suffering of Palestinians, whose individual and collective future remains bound up in unlawful and ongoing displacement, is unfair, immoral and illegal.

Educate yourself.

Organize fact-finding visits to meet with Palestinian refugees and IDPs in the Middle East. Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Israel and the 1967 occupied Palestinian territory are hosts to Palestinian refugees. In addition, make contact with and learn how to support Palestinian refugees living near you.

Write editorials for your local press, focusing on mainstream media. If you read or watch something that does not adequately explain the issue of the Palestinian refugees, respond with a letter to the editor or television station. Be brief, positive and use facts to back up your arguments. Make sure to also write letters of encouragement for articles or presentations that accurately represent the refugee issue.

Get involved.

Meet with experts and awareness-raising committees in your area and participate in their activities, in particular those related to the 60th anniversary of the Nakba and anti-apartheid and BDS campaigns (see below). These activities can include writing letters, petitions, sponsoring public debates, holding film presentations and exhibitions, lobbying and staging public protests.

Give your support to the projects and initiatives of Palestinian refugees and IDPs. Work to gain backing from unions, religious groups, and municipalities, particularly “twinning” which can build long-lasting relationships and advocacy support. Hold your political representatives accountable.



The 2005 World Social Forum in Porte Allegre, Brazil. The demonstrators' sign reads, "Palestine: Resistance is not terrorism." Photo by Badil

Educate others.

Support Palestinian refugees and IDPs.

Important Dates in 2008

► 30 March: Palestinian Land Day

Public release of Nakba 60 Declaration by the ECCP and Action Platform-Belgium. See www.association-belgo-palestinienne.be/coordination-europeenne/presentation-eccp.htm

► 9 April: Commemoration of the Deir Yassin Massacre

► 30 April – 2 May, Bil'in, Palestine

Third Annual Conference on Popular Struggle organized by the Friends of Freedom and Justice. See www.ffj-bilin.org

► 15 May: NAKBA DAY

Worldwide Moment of Silence. Events in Palestine organized by the National Committee for the Commemoration of Nakba-60

► 16 – 18 May: 6th Al-Awda Annual Convention, Anaheim, USA

► 20 June: International Refugee Day

► 9 July: Anniversary of the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on the Wall

► 8 – 10 August

US Popular Palestinian National Conference, Chicago, USA. "Palestinians in the US: Reclaiming Our Voice, Asserting Our Narrative". See www.palestineconference.org

► 10 December: 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

► 11 December: 60th Anniversary of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194