



## WHAT ARE B.D.S TACTICS?

- BDS refers to boycotts, divestments and sanctions (BDS) that place economic and political pressure on states to influence their behavior.
- The Jewish community – along with many in the international community – has and does correctly support the use of these methods when appropriate, such as Apartheid-era South Africa in the 1980s and Iran today.
- Unfortunately, these tactics have been co-opted by the “BDS Movement” that propagates an extreme, inflammatory and biased political agenda designed to undermine the legitimacy of the State of Israel.

## WHAT IS THE B.D.S. MOVEMENT (OR CAMPAIGN)?

- The BDS Movement is a global network of individuals and organizations who aim to isolate Israel politically, economically and culturally. Their overall objective is to challenge Israel’s right to exist as the sovereign homeland of the Jewish people, which is often called delegitimization.
- The BDS Movement attempts to have their agenda adopted by institutions including colleges and universities, faith-based communities, labor unions, civil and human rights organizations and minority groups, as well as all others they can successfully influence.
- While they claim they are interested in an equitable and peaceful solution to the conflict, their approach impedes a just outcome and offers a distorted, intolerant and one-sided picture of a complex situation.
- At the same time, the boundaries of the BDS Movement and its supporters are not always clearly defined. Often the BDS Movement attempts to co-opt well-meaning people who want to help the parties. It is thus essential to recognize the true goals of the BDS Movement. They offer a false choice of acting either in Israeli or Palestinian interests while the goal should be to act in both of their interests.

## WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE B.D.S. MOVEMENT?

- Despite claiming to seek “peace,” the BDS Movement works unambiguously to undermine the “two states for two peoples” solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which is the commonly accepted goal of the United States, the European Union and the United Nations.
- For example, the BDS Movement calls for the return of Palestinian refugees to modern day Israel, not a Palestinian state, which would eliminate the State of Israel as we know it and replace it with an Arab majority state in all of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.
- Omar Barghouti, one of the founders of the BDS Movement stated, “Good riddance! The two-state solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is finally dead. But someone has to issue an official death certificate before the rotting corpse is given a proper burial and we can all move on ...”
- Even Norman Finkelstein, a prominent and harsh critic of Israel, denounced the BDS Movement because it aims for “the end of Israel.”
- Clearly the strategy of the BDS Movement is to delegitimize Israel’s very existence in order to secure a one-state solution to the conflict through Israel’s dissolution as a Jewish and democratic, multicultural state.

## WILL BDS TACTICS HELP TO SOLVE THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT?

- The goal of peace depends on both Israelis and Palestinians working together with international support towards the mutual goal of a negotiated two-state solution. In contrast, BDS tactics are one-sided and are focused solely on pressuring Israel, thus creating a distorted picture of the region. Rather than improve the situation, these advocates undermine the internationally-backed peace process that is premised on the development of mutual understanding and respect.
- Economic boycotts and divestment actions will not help the Palestinian people. The path to the two-state solution depends on creating an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation combined with economic development and political achievement.
- Boycotts are not new. Ever since Israel's establishment, the Arab world has tried to use an economic boycott to isolate and weaken Israel politically and economically. While Egypt and Jordan have trade links with Israel, most Arab countries do not trade directly with Israel. The Roadmap peace plan to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (proposed by the United States, European Union, Russia and the United Nations) specifically calls for the normalization of relations between the Arab states and Israel, including the return of trade links.

## WHY ARE ACADEMIC, TRADE AND CULTURAL BOYCOTTS PROBLEMATIC AND WHO HAS REJECTED THEM?

- Promoting an academic and cultural boycott of Israel – a central goal of the BDS Movement – contradicts the principles of academic freedom and the open spirit of international cooperation between scientists, artists and others. It is particularly counterproductive to target Israel's academic community, which promotes honest debate, criticism and self-examination within Israeli society. Israel's universities enroll significant numbers of Arab students and are important forums for interaction and cooperation between Jews and Arabs. Indeed, Omar Barghouti, a leader of the BDS Movement, recently received his doctorate from Tel Aviv University.
- It is for that reason that the American Association of University Professors [has rejected any academic boycott of Israel](#). Likewise, prominent Palestinian academics such as Sari Nusseibeh, president of Al Quds University in East Jerusalem, have been firm critics of efforts to boycott Israeli universities and academics.
- For similar reasons, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which represents 312 affiliated organizations in 156 countries and territories representing 176 million workers, [rejected calls to support the BDS Movement](#) and, instead, called for a two-state solution to allow both peoples to live in peace and security.

## WHO HAS REJECTED DIVESTMENT RESOLUTIONS?

- Divestment resolutions promoted by the BDS Movement have been widely rejected by a variety of organizations as being counterproductive to the goal of reaching a peaceful solution to the conflict.
- For example, in 2013 TIAA-CREF, the leading retirement provider for people who work in academic, research, medical and cultural fields, declined to present a divestment proposal to its shareholders. In fact, TIAA-CREF won approval from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) stating that consideration of such a resolution was unnecessary in 2013, and follows a similar SEC ruling in 2011. Similarly, the United Methodist Church, the nation's largest mainline Protestant denomination, voted against a divestment resolution at their 2012 convention. The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church has also rejected divestment and boycotts as "unhelpful."

## WHAT ABOUT SANCTIONS?

- Sanctions typically refer to attempts by national governments, multilateral organizations and other international bodies to limit or ban trade and other relations with certain states. Importantly, the United States and Western countries – as opposed to Iran or Apartheid-era South Africa – completely reject applying sanctions to Israel. Indeed trade, scientific exchanges and cultural relations have flourished between Israel and the rest of the world over the last decade. In fact, in 2010, the influential Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) voted unanimously for Israel to join its ranks, praising its scientific and technological progress as having “produced outstanding outcomes on a world scale.”

## WHAT IS THE JEWISH COMMUNITY’S VIEW ON APPLYING BDS TACTICS AGAINST ISRAEL?

- While the safety and welfare of Israel is of great concern to the entire American Jewish community, it holds diverse views on what will bring peace in the Middle East. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the community, including organizations such as [Ameinu](#) and [J Street](#), seeks peace with Israel’s neighbors and has consistently opposed the approach, methods and goals of the BDS movement.

## WHAT CAN WE DO TO ADVANCE PEACE FOR THOSE IN THE CONFLICT?

- Those seeking to foster peace should support programs and efforts that promote reconciliation and coexistence, rather than tearing down either party as advocated by the BDS Movement. We need to support efforts that help the parties move toward a “two states for two peoples” solution that would create a Jewish and democratic state of Israel, alongside an independent State of Palestine.
- There are many positive opportunities to build the Palestinian economy and infrastructure, as well as encourage economic cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians. It is through these types of activities that we can help both Palestinians and Israelis live together, side-by-side.

## THE BOTTOM LINE ON THE BDS MOVEMENT

- Israel is a pluralistic and democratic society and these tools are neither appropriate nor are they an honest attempt to bring about peace. The BDS Movement is simply using these tactics to tell an anti-Israel story which is counterproductive, disingenuous and plain wrong.
- We need to extricate ourselves from the old paradigm of the BDS Movement that advocates a win-lose approach and unfairly demonizes one side of what is a complicated conflict. We should be building bridges between different peoples, not burning them.
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said: “Don’t use cures that don’t cure, blessings that don’t bless, solutions that don’t solve.” BDS tactics won’t solve the conflict, encouraging investment, engagement and a negotiated solution can.