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**Israel Action Network Condemns American Anthropological Association  
Resolution Boycotting Israeli Academic Institutions**

*NEW YORK* – On Friday, members of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) voted in favor of a resolution calling on the organization to boycott Israeli academic institutions. After a vote of 1,040 to 136 to support a boycott, the resolution, which was brought to the floor at AAA’s annual business meeting, must now be submitted to an electronic vote of the entire membership for ratification. A date for this process, which will last at least 30 days, will be set for the spring. A majority is required for adoption as organizational policy. A proposed amendment, to reaffirm the AAA’s support for academic freedom and opposition to discrimination based on national origin failed to be included in the resolution. In reaction to Friday’s vote, the Israel Action Network (IAN), a strategic initiative of The Jewish Federations of North America in partnership with the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, issued the following statement:

“The Israel Action Network (IAN) is deeply disappointed and concerned by the decision of those attending the Business Meeting of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) to support a resolution in favor of a boycott of Israeli academic institutions. This measure, which greatly undermines the tenets of academic freedom, hinders vital discourse and open dialogue on issues of global concern, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and restricts relationships with Israel’s universities and scholars in a punitive fashion.

While the resolution put forward by the group Anthropologists for the Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions claims to support academic freedom, it is in fact calling for a far-reaching boycott of Israeli institutions based on one-sided and extreme rhetoric. Tellingly, a proposed amendment to reaffirm the association’s “long-standing support of academic freedom and its opposition to measures that foster discrimination on the basis of race, religions, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability” failed to be incorporated into the resolution. This demonstrates the discriminatory nature of the resolution, which is incompatible with these values. Israeli scholars — indeed, academics in general — are often the most critical of their government’s policies. Instituting a boycott against this segment of the population in particular can do nothing but cause harm to those within Israeli society working hardest to bring about peace.

The AAA is an organization of approximately 11,000 members. IAN commends those in the organization who actively opposed the measure and provided alternatives based on the principle of open dialogue between Israeli scholars and the international academic community. Having been passed by those present at the AAA Business Meeting, the entire AAA membership will soon have the opportunity to vote on the validity of the resolution through an electronic membership-wide vote, during a period this spring, to be determined by the organization’s Executive Committee.

IAN calls upon the AAA membership to reject this resolution and instead favor alternatives that support Palestinian academic institutions and scholars in ways that do not unfairly punish their Israeli counterparts. IAN also recommends that anthropologists of the AAA use the skills of their discipline to empower both sides through collaborative projects and dialogue.

If, however, this resolution is adopted by a majority of those AAA members who choose to vote and a boycott of Israeli institutions is established, there will be several negative outcomes. No scholar or higher institution of learning should be singled out based on their nationality, especially considering the crucial role they play in their society as thought leaders. "Blacklisting" in such a manner will not aid in bringing about peace and reconciliation; these measures can and will only result in restricting free access for Israeli academics to research and collaborate with their international colleagues. IAN thus urges this academic professional organization, as well as the academic community at large, to join in rejecting this destructive approach to addressing issues of concern, which violates the principles of academic freedom.

Academics have the opportunity to play a very constructive role in encouraging Israelis and Palestinians to come together and work towards a negotiated, two-state solution that will benefit both peoples. However, if peace is ever to be achieved, discriminatory and divisive policies will only serve as roadblocks. Rather, it is the ability to debate and communicate openly and without prejudice that is conducive to understanding and compromise."

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*IAN is a strategic initiative of The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) in partnership with the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), which together represents the majority of affiliated Jews in North America through 15 national Jewish agency members, 151 Jewish Federations, 300 Network communities and 125 Jewish community relations councils. IAN, JFNA and JCPA, all seek a just two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that will allow both Israelis and Palestinians to live in lasting peace, dignity and security.*