

Support Palestinians, Embrace BDS

One aspect of supporting and empowering the Palestinian people involves countering their enemy. Israel is not only neglecting and refusing to recognize the norms of international law relating to the Palestinian people but continuously violates and denies Palestinian basic human rights such as the right of return, specifically for those who have been forcibly and brutally expelled from the Palestinian lands.

In this regard, countering the Zionist movement necessitates huge efforts not only by Palestinians and Arabs but also by countries such as Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia etc. In fact, any person who is concerned about justice and humanity. Nevertheless, a well-defined vision followed by actions based on a coordinated worldwide solidarity and cooperation will make an enormous impact in favor of Palestinian rights.

The Palestinian-led movement “Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions”, also known as BDS, has a very clear vision as well as a coordinated cooperation and solidarity worldwide, targeting cultural, economic and academic boycotts of the Zionist apartheid state of Israel. BDS is an ethical oriented movement struggling non-violently to regain Palestinians' rights based on freedom, justice, and equality. BDS advocates that the Palestinian people have the same rights as the rest of humankind to live in peace and security. The ongoing Israeli violations of these rights compounded by the occupation lead around 170 Palestinian popular resistance committees, political parties, unions, civil societies and other institutions to come together to establish the movement in 2005.

The BDS movement and strategy was strongly inspired by the experiences of the nonviolent struggles against the apartheid system in South Africa. BDS of Israel has opted for the tactics adopted by the anti-apartheid activists in South Africa and globally, that were peaceful yet effective in contributing to the isolation of the apartheid government of South Africa which ultimately resulted in its collapse. As a model and tactic, it is now being applied to counter Israeli economic, cultural and political power to end Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine with the social justice vision of overthrowing the racist, Israeli apartheid regime. Similarly, BDS was also inspired by the progressive changes brought forth by the US civil movement.

According to BDS activists, the movement seeks to use boycotts, divestments, and sanctions on the state of Israel as a tool to non-violently, coerce the apartheid state of Israel to end its occupation of the Palestinian territories. In other words, the occupation must become expensive, economically, culturally and academically hurtful and difficult for Israel. Therefore, as a global-oriented movement, BDS attempts to put worldwide pressure on the state of Israel to end its apartheid and colonization of the Palestinians lands which can be achieved by isolating Israel.

The BDS vision has received global support from numerous individuals [\[1\]](#), institutions [\[2\]](#), companies, churches, governments etc. who have fully embraced BDS into their activities. By adopting BDS against Israel, these institutions, governments, and activists have huge impacts not only on the Israeli economy but also, through their activism the ugly reality of the Israel apartheid regime and its unethical and oppressive laws and policies towards the Palestinian people are revealed.

Furthermore, Israel sees in the BDS movement a serious diplomatic threat where one of the Israeli leaders [\[3\]](#) describes the movement as a ‘political tsunami’ that could hit Israel. To elaborate on the impact and success of on Israel, it is important to articulate that in 2006 Israel created the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, whose one main objective has been to counter, and lobby against BDS and to put pressure on the state level to encourage governments to ban the BDS movement.

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Turkey and the Turkish people have a unique history of standing up for justice and supporting oppressed people against their oppressors. In particular, Turkey and the Turkish people have stood in support of the Palestinian people. Obviously, Turkey has a huge solidarity and sympathy with Palestinians. Indeed, this solidarity in Turkey unites every single party and group. But that support needs to translate into a bigger and more effect solidarity which can be realized peacefully and non-violently by embracing the BDS movement. There are three levels on which Turkey and Turkish people can take action to support the BDS movement.

Firstly, on the individual level, individuals can fully embrace the BDS movement in all of its aspects and principles. This includes the cultural, economic and academic boycott of Israel.

Secondly, on the level of civil society, NGOs can play a significant role in introducing and educating the Turkish people about BDS and its implications in Turkey.

Finally, on the governmental level, the government can be influenced in this regard through collective and coordinated efforts of the NGOs. Turkey can do a lot on this level, for instance it can play a central role in coordinating the efforts of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states to empower the BDS movement and by ensuring that no government contracts are given to Israeli companies identified as companies operational in the OPT or in the Settlements or in the security sector that brutalises Palestinians.

Supporting the BDS movement gives the Palestinians the impression that people are concerned about them and their situation since the BDS movement indeed constitutes a very practical contribution in countering the Israeli apartheid regime. Again, this is another reason why Israel attempts with every possible method to stop the movement and sees in it a real threat to its entire regime. Nevertheless, normalizing the relationships with Israel harms, directly and indirectly, the Palestinians and their rights and endangers their future as free people. To conclude, BDS is an opportunity to demonstrate an actual solidarity and sympathy with the colonized and oppressed Palestinians around the world, by constructively engaging with and against the apartheid state in a non-violent way.

[1] There are numberless of academicians announced their boycott of Israeli educational institutions, for instance, Judith Butler, Rosalind Petchesky, and Susan Buck-Morss.

[2] For instance, University of Johannesburg and Tshwane University of Technology in South Africa.

[3] Ehud Barak.