

Boycotting Israeli Apartheid Back on the Agenda

British Academics to boycott Israel

By [Global Research](#)

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[The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel](#) 30 May 2007

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The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) salutes the historic decision by the University and College Union (UCU) Congress today to support motions that endorse the logic of academic boycott against Israel, in response to the complicity of the Israeli academy in perpetuating Israel's illegal military occupation and apartheid system.

Academic boycott has been advocated in the past as an effective tool in resisting injustice. In the 1920s, Mahatma Gandhi called for boycotting British-run academic institutions, to increase Indian self-reliance and also to protest the role of those institutions in maintaining British colonial domination over India. In the 1950s, the African National Congress (ANC) called for a comprehensive boycott of the entire South African academy, as a means to further isolate the apartheid regime. To their credit, British academics were among the very first to adopt the latter boycott. Moral consistency makes it imperative to hold Israel to the same standards.

Israel is now widely recognized as a state that actually practices apartheid, as evidenced in recent declarations by international figures from Jimmy Carter and UN Special Rapporteur on human rights Prof. John Dugard to Archbishop Desmond Tutu and South African government minister Ronnie Kasrils, among many others. During the ongoing occupation of Palestinian land, Israel's policies have included house demolitions; Jews-only colonies and roads; uprooting hundreds of thousands of trees; indiscriminate killings of Palestinian civilians, particularly children; relentless theft of land and water resources; and denying millions of their freedom of movement by slicing up the occupied Palestinian territory into Bantustans — some entirely caged by walls, fences and hundreds of roadblocks.

Throughout forty years of Israeli military occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Israeli academics have duly continued to serve in the occupation army, thereby participating in, or at least witnessing, crimes committed on a daily basis against the civilian population of Palestine. No Israeli academic institution, association, or union has ever publicly opposed Israel's occupation and colonization, its system of racial discrimination against its own Palestinian citizens, or its obstinate denial of the internationally-sanctioned rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties. Furthermore, the Israeli academy has been in direct or indirect collusion with the military-intelligence establishment, providing it with "academic" research services to sustain its oppression.

This courageous and morally laudable decision by the UCU to apply effective pressure

against Israel in the pursuit of justice and genuine peace is only the latest measure adopted by an international community that can no longer tolerate Israel's impunity in trashing human rights principles and international law. In the last few months alone, groups heeding — to various degrees — Palestinian calls for boycott and effective pressure against Israel have included the British National Union of Journalists (NUJ); Aosdana, the Irish state-sponsored academy of artists; Congress Of South African Trade Unions (COSATU); and prominent British and international architects led by Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine (APJP).

Once again, the taboo has been shattered. It has now become more legitimate than ever to denounce Israel's oppressive policies and to hold the state and all its complicit institutions accountable for human rights abuses, war crimes, and the longest military occupation in modern history. The Israeli academy will no longer be able to enjoy international recognition, cooperation, and generous support while remaining an accessory to crimes committed against the Palestinians.

Palestinians are now more confident than ever that international civil society is indeed capable of shouldering the moral responsibility of standing up to injustice and demanding freedom, self-determination, and unmitigated equality for all.

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