

Hillary Clinton Pledges to Defend Israeli Apartheid and Fight BDS Movement in Letter to Mega-Donor

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Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton sent a letter to media mogul Haim Saban, a mega-donor, assuring him that she would make countering the global Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel a priority. She invoked a recent terrorist attack against Jews in Paris to condemn BDS and specifically sought Saban's advice on how to fight back.

"I am writing to express my alarm over the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, or 'BDS,' a global effort to isolate the State of Israel by ending commercial and academic exchanges," Clinton wrote [[PDF](#)]. "I am seeking your advice on how we can work together—across party lines and with a diverse array of voices—to reverse this trend with information and advocacy, and fight back against further attempts to isolate and delegitimize Israel."

Clinton expressed serious concern over comparisons between Israel and South African apartheid.

"Israel is a vibrant democracy in a region dominated by autocracy, and it faces existential threats to its survival," Clinton asserted. "Particularly at a time when anti-Semitism is on the rise across the world—especially in Europe—we need to repudiate forceful efforts to malign and undermine Israel and the Jewish people. After all, it was only six months ago that four Jews were targeted and killed in a Kosher supermarket in Paris as they did their Sabbath shopping."

The invoking of a terrorist attack against Jews in Paris is a nasty attempt to cast the growing nonviolent BDS movement as anti-Semitic. In fact, to read Clinton's letter in its entirety, one has to believe Israel is engaged in no acts of occupation or oppression against the Palestinians and a movement is mobilizing out of hatred or baseless assumptions about Israel.

In [a column](#) for the Los Angeles Times published in May 2014, Saree Makdisi, a UCLA professor and author of *Palestine Inside Out: An Everyday Occupation*, explained that apartheid is not merely used to inflame tensions. It very specifically has legal meaning, as outlined by the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. (Note: The UN General Assembly adopted the convention in 1973 and most UN member states except for Israel and the United States have ratified the convention.)

From Makdisi's column:

According to Article II of that convention, the term applies to acts “committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them.” Denying those others the right to life and liberty, subjecting them to arbitrary arrest, expropriating their property, depriving them of the right to leave and return to their country or the right to freedom of movement and of residence, creating separate reserves and ghettos for the members of different racial groups, preventing mixed marriages — these are all examples of the crime of apartheid specifically mentioned in the convention.

Israel engages in all of these actions against Palestinians. In fact, as Gil Maguire has [shown](#), Israel “created an apartheid system and became an apartheid state at the end of the 1967 war.”

One of Clinton’s arguments in her letter is that BDS seeks to “punish Israel and dictate how the Israelis and Palestinians should resolve the core issues of their conflict.” She indicates she supports a two-state solution and that can only be achieved through “direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians—it cannot be imposed from the outside or by unilateral actions.”

If anything, it is Israel which seeks to unilaterally impose a resolution and that resolution is protect and even expand apartheid.

Former President Bill Clinton shared in 2011 the reason why the “peace process” failed. According to Foreign Policy, Clinton [claimed](#) it was because of the reluctance of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s administration to “accept the terms of the Camp David deal” and a “demographic shift in Israel” that made the Israeli public “less amenable to peace.”

What BDS is doing is building a worldwide consensus that seeks to force Israel to stop killing, torturing, detaining, abusing, and repressing Palestinians through its inhumane policies. It increasingly has more support than the resolution Israel seeks to impose against Palestinians.

The letter’s conclusion is rather nauseating.

...It was more than three decades ago when Bill and I took our first trip to Israel, walked the ancient streets of Jerusalem’s Old City, and fell in love with the country and its people. Israel became a special place for us, and I’m lucky to have had many opportunities to return and to make any dear friends there over the years. The Jewish state is a modern day miracle—a vibrant bloom in the middle of a desert. We must nurture and protect it. [emphasis added]

Clinton fervently expresses this belief that Israel is a “vibrant democracy in a region dominated by autocracy, and it faces existential threats to its survival.” However, being surrounded by countries with dictatorships should not insulate a government from having to address their own systematic human rights violations.

Finally, Clinton wrote this letter to help re-solidify Saban’s support for her presidential campaign. It is largely a public relations ploy against right wing groups. Saban has always been close to Clinton and the Democratic Party.

Saban supports increased exports of US military equipment to Israel. He zealously opposes

statehood for Palestine and any UN Security Council resolution against illegal Israeli settlements.

In 2006, Saban declared, “When there is a terrorist attack, I am [Avigdor] Lieberman. Sometimes to the right of Lieberman. For two days I really love Lieberman. But afterward I come back to reality. Look, I don’t see a solution today.”

For those unfamiliar with Lieberman, he is Israeli foreign minister. In March, he [said](#), “Anyone who’s with us should be given everything – up to half the kingdom. Anyone who’s against us, there’s nothing to do – we should raise an axe and cut off his head; otherwise we won’t survive here.” He also has expressly made statements in support of ethnic cleansing Palestinians.

Saban has teamed up with casino mogul Sheldon Adelson to raise millions to fight BDS. The two mega-donors [hosted](#) a closed-doors summit in June that could be used to challenge campus campaigns. Only those “willing to pledge at least \$1 million over the next two years” were allowed to participate.

Morton Klein, the national president of the Zionist Organization of America, called for all groups to come together and “demonize the demonizers.” Everyone needs to demonize the “racists by telling the truth about the Palestinian Authority and giving examples of what it does as a racist terror organization.”

This is what Hillary Clinton’s campaign is pledging to join forces and support. However, it will be extraordinarily difficult to beat back the momentum of the BDS movement. There are increased efforts in states and the federal government to criminalize the movement yet the BDS movement continues to win victories. Recently, the United Church of Christ [pledged](#) to boycott and divest from companies involved in Israeli occupation.

“For Palestinians living under occupation or facing systematic discrimination as citizens of Israel, enduring the destruction of their homes and businesses, the theft of their land for settlements, and living under blockade and siege in Gaza, this action sends a strong signal that they are not alone, and that there are churches who still dare to speak truth to power and stand with the oppressed,” Rev. Mitri Raheb, a Christian Palestinian and Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, declared after the Church passed its divestment resolution.

This letter from Clinton is destined to become an artifact of history that will forever remind the world of which leaders were on the wrong side.

Clinton may be elected the first woman president in November 2016, but, just as President Ronald Reagan will forever be remembered as a fervent supporter of South African apartheid, Clinton is now on a path to potentially becoming a US president, who aligned herself with militant defenders of Israeli apartheid.

Creative Commons Licensed Photo by Gregory Hauenstein of Hillary Clinton at campaign event in Des Moines, IA, on June 14, 2015, and posted to [Flickr](#).

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