

Palestinian Civil Society Condemns Canadian Government Disinformation and Repression Against BDS Boycott Movement

By [BDS Movement](#)

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The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), the largest coalition of Palestinian civil society organisations that leads the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement, has condemned the Canadian government's ramped up disinformation campaign and repressive measures against the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement for Palestinian rights.

BDS is a global, Palestinian-led nonviolent human rights movement that aims to apply pressure on Israel, as was done on apartheid South Africa, to fully comply with its obligations under international law.

Canada and Israel [signed](#) a series of cooperation agreements recently, one of which included an unprecedented commitment to work jointly to counter the continued growth of BDS.

On January 22, Canadian public safety minister Steven Blaney gave a speech at a meeting on anti-semitism at the United Nations General Assembly, convened in the wake of the Paris criminal attacks, that [smeared](#) the BDS movement as "anti-semitic."

Rafeef Ziadah, a secretariat member of the the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), the broad coalition of Palestinian civil society organisations that leads the BDS movement, said:

"Rather than seeking to hold Israel to account for its war crimes during the recent military assault on Gaza and its intensified colonization of the occupied West Bank, particularly in Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley, the Canadian government is further deepening its collaboration with Israel's occupation and launching a shameful, propagandistic attack on free speech in the process."

"The Canadian government's continued unconditional support for Israel's colonial policies and its smear campaign against BDS highlight the deeply ideological and reactionary character of this government. Canada is sending Israel the message that it can act with total impunity in violating human rights and international law."

"Sadly, while claiming to defend free speech the current Canadian government is among the most repressive in the west; it has gone farther than most in suppressing free speech and infringing the rights of its own civil society, including trade unions, community and faith

groups, to participate in human rights campaigning, as in boycotts against Israel's injustices."

As a matter of principle, the BDS movement has consistently and categorically opposed all forms of racism, including anti-semitism and Islamophobia. The movement's anti-racist, human rights platform is growing into the western mainstream and attracting growing support among Canadians, including many Jewish Canadians who join conscientious and progressive Jewish Israelis in rejecting Israel's claim to commit its atrocities in their name.

In her 2009 article endorsing BDS against Israel's regime of occupation and oppression, the world best-selling author Naomi Klein [wrote](#):

"It's time. Long past time. The best strategy to end the increasingly bloody occupation is for Israel to become the target of the kind of global movement that put an end to apartheid in South Africa."

The award-winning Canadian filmmaker John Greyson, who has produced some of the BDS movement's most creative videos, has justified his support for BDS and boycott of the Tel Aviv queer film festival [saying](#): "[BDS] is the only peaceful means right now that can have an effect on the Israeli state that has gone completely out of control. ... A line in the sand has been drawn."

South African Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, a great supporter of the BDS movement, after presenting a report to the United Nations Human Rights Council about an Israeli war crime in the occupied Gaza Strip in 2008 [said](#):

"I think the West, quite rightly, is feeling contrite, penitent for its awful connivance with the Holocaust The West is penitent, the penance is being paid by the Palestinians. ... I just hope that ordinary citizens in the West will wake up and say, 'we refuse to be part of this'."

Rafeef Ziadah concluded,

"At a time when people of conscience the world over are joining the Palestinian BDS movement for freedom, justice and equality and connecting it with their own struggles for social and economic justice, equal rights, indigenous rights, minority rights, and environmental protection, the Canadian government is standing on the wrong side of history, supporting a pernicious regime of Israeli occupation, colonialism and apartheid."

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