

Proposed Israeli Law Would Make Supporting Economic or Academic Boycott of Israel a Crime

By [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#)

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Montreal – Twenty-five members of the Knesset have introduced a bill which, if passed, will make it an offence for any organization or citizen to call for an economic or academic boycott of Israel. The bill will affect those who launch, encourage or provide assistance and information on the boycott of Israel, whether they live in Israel or abroad. Anyone violating the law will have to provide compensation to those affected by the boycott. Initiated by the Land of Israel lobby, the bill has been approved by members of different parties, including the Likud and Kadima parties, and the 10 chairs of Knesset commissions.

Under the bill, Israeli citizens or organizations could be sued by anyone having sustained damages due to a boycott and ordered to pay a fine of at least 30,000 shekels (about \$ 8,000 CDN). Particularly targeted by this bill are university academics who, either within Israel or overseas, call for an economic or academic boycott of Israel. Israeli organizations such as Boycott! and the Coalition of Women for Peace could also be affected by the new law.

The bill will also grant Israel's Ministry of the Interior the power to prohibit for a period of 10 years the entry into Israel of any foreigner proven to have actively participated in the boycott of Israel. Also targeted are foreign states and organizations, including the Palestinian Authority (PA). The latter may not use their Israeli bank accounts and will see their assets frozen in order to be tapped to provide compensation to Israeli businesses and institutions affected by the boycott. Israel will be able to block the transfer of revenues that it receives for the PA, and retain amounts equivalent to the losses caused by the boycott of goods produced in the Israeli colonies located in Palestinian territory.

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) deplores the introduction of such a bill in the Knesset. "It's amazing that there is no introspection in Israel in the face of the BDS campaign," comments CJPME President Thomas Woodley. "Rather than considering the motives for the boycott, divest and sanction movement, these Israeli politicians have chosen to punish individuals seeking to non-violently express their disapproval of Israeli government policy."

The bill appears to be primarily motivated by the Palestinian boycott of products from the Israeli colonies. That boycott has already had a significant impact on Israel's economy. In April, Palestinian leaders in effect passed a law forbidding the sale of goods produced in the Israeli colonies in the West Bank, which has been occupied by Israel since 1967. The same PA law also forbids Palestinians to work in those colonies.

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Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is a non-profit and secular organization bringing together men and women of all backgrounds who labour to see justice and peace take root again in the Middle East. Its mission is to empower decision-makers to view all sides with fairness and to promote the equitable and sustainable development of the region.

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