

# The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel and the Criminalisation of Free Speech

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#), [Religion](#)  
In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

*In what appears to be another attempt to suppress criticism of Israel, the Canadian government has signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with Israel which makes the claim that “the selective targeting of Israel is the new face of anti-Semitism” and declares that Canada will oppose those who support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.*

*Shortly after the MOU was signed, Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney announced to the UN General Assembly that the Canadian government would exercise “zero tolerance” toward “all forms of discrimination including rhetoric towards Israel, and attempts to delegitimise Israel such as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement.”*

From an Independent Jewish Voices – Canada (IJV) [statement](#).

Despite the embarrassing and shameful sight of their political leaders continually rushing to fawn and genuflect at the feet of the pro-Israeli lobby, there has been a growing international coalition of principled individuals — such as the (<http://www.bdsmovement.net>) — who are opposed not only to Israel’s belligerent disregard for international law and human rights, but also to its undisguised subversion of the democratic process in countries that are supposedly allies. In response to this audacious threat of people’s opposition to political corruption that precludes respect for human rights and justice, Israel and its political allies have chosen to respond with legislation — [Bill C-51](#) for example — designed to intimidate and suppress such opposition by either threatening to use or by actually using legal punishments. Nowhere is this iniquitous ploy more evident than in Canada where slippery Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s right-wing government is widely regarded as Israel’s strongest bought and paid for ally.

Fortunately for Canada and its democracy, not all Canadians are prepared to quietly acquiesce to the surrender of their right to free speech and the IJV’s positive initiative has resulted in over 80 organisations — including major trade unions, and labour councils along with civil liberty, anti-war, religious and student groups — endorsing the statement: “We, the undersigned organisations, oppose attempts by the Canadian government to criminalise criticism of or opposition to the actions of any country.”

Israeli lobby influence is by no means restricted to North America and in France recently French President Francois Hollande promised that his government would soon announce a raft of tough criminal laws that crack down on “anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia, and

Holocaust denial.” His announcement was made in a speech to CRIF, France’s main Jewish communal body and Israel lobby group. Hollande added that the Internet needed to be “regulated” to suppress videos and even search results deemed to be “anti-Semitic” with an appropriate model being the laws used to prevent the dissemination of child pornography.

Criminalising criticism of Israel would conflate Zionism with Judaism and restrict the right to the freedom of speech that was much vaunted following the attack on the Charlie Hebdo French satirical weekly magazine. Hollande has just reaffirmed his undying support for Apartheid Israel by urging vigilance against anti-Semitism and racism — but not the racist Israeli persecution of the Palestinian people — during a ceremony at the Natzweiler-Struthof camp in Alsace marking 70 years since the last Nazi camps were liberated by Allied troops.



One of the finest examples of a *double standard* was this week’s main feature of the U.S. Congress where the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) with an iron Zionist fist and deep Jewish coffers implements Congressional allegiance to Israel rather than to the American people. (<http://www.hiramicbrotherhood.com/#!/The-US-Congress-a-Metonym-for-AIPAC/c1whk/6D245DB5-80C2-443E-B22F-C50018A38E73>).

Jewish Senator Ben Cardin has throughout most of his life been active in supporting boycotts—including anti-Apartheid boycotts of Afrikaner South Africa—as a means of achieving racial, social and economic justice. Cardin’s unstinting humanitarian efforts, however, do not apparently apply to the Palestinian people whose legal and human rights were once again jettisoned to favour Apartheid Israel. Cardin introduced an AIPAC-sponsored amendment to a trade bill that seeks to derail the growing boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement. (<http://www.bdsmovement.net>)

Cardin’s amendment is designed to pressure the European Union (EU) — currently negotiating the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) with the United States — to abandon steps taken in recent years to oppose Israeli settlements. Such steps have included new guidelines to prevent either individuals or organisations operating within

Israeli-occupied territories from receiving EU funding and a requirement that settlement products entering the EU must be labelled accordingly. As presented, the legislation would conflate Israel with the Occupied Palestinian Territories and directly contravene decades of official U.S. policy by in part stating that “the term ‘actions to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel’ means actions by states, non-member states of the United Nations, international organisations, or affiliated agencies of international organisations that are politically motivated and are intended to penalise or otherwise limit commercial relations specifically with Israel or person doing business in Israel or in Israeli-controlled territories.”

Inclusion of the term “Israeli-controlled territories” undoubtedly lends legitimacy to Israel’s illegal settlements and you cannot get a more kosher *double standard* than that apart from Israel’s exemption from criticism despite the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution: in the U.S. you can criticise anyone or anything except the Jews and Israel.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

U.S. Constitution, 1st Amendment

Despite the recent mainstream media hullabaloo regarding a cooling of U.S.-Israeli relations following Benjamin Netanyahu’s address to Congress and his subsequent pre-Israeli election pledge that under his leadership there would never be a Palestinian state, President Obama —was he blackmailed, bribed or threatened with assassination? — has just approved the *sale* of 19 “stealth” aircraft at a cost of \$2.7 billion, which will be deducted from US aid funds to Israel. This not only confirms the influence of AIPAC over the U.S. government, but also raises the question of how far does Israel have to go with its violations of international law and human rights before the U.S. will finally voice an objection. Can you imagine the extent of international outrage if the roles of the Arabs and Jews in the following video clip were reversed?

During the past few weeks the world witnessed several large scale human tragedies starting with the capsizing of a fishing vessel overloaded with migrants —with some 700 reported dead —that caused the Interior ministers and senior police officials from the 28 countries of the European Union to rush to Luxembourg for emergency meetings on how to respond to the frequent migrant boat tragedies in the Mediterranean. The second even greater tragedy was the earthquake in Nepal where the Prime Minister said the death toll could reach 10,000. Both tragedies have received — and quite rightly so — extensive mainstream media coverage that elicited an outpouring of sympathy and the setting up of numerous relief appeals. While such disasters —the former being man-made and the latter being caused by nature — are for some reason or other unavoidable, there is much human suffering and death that can be avoided.

Tragic as they were, these two disasters also served to highlight the unconscionable human tragedy of hyper-hypocrisy. This writer cannot recall seeing a similar international reaction or response during last summer’s Operation Protective Edge when Israel with its U.S. taxpayer-funded military might pounded the already hapless, persecuted, and blockaded Palestinian inhabitants of the Gaza strip. EU leaders did not rush to Brussels to agree on a course of action that would force Israel to cease its barbaric ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Palestinian population; that bullshit champion of democracy and human rights,



the U.S., raised not a single forceful objection but continued to obsequiously provide aid and military assistance to an Apartheid state that with impunity violates every Article of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights; But worst of all, we the people, cosseted by an illusionary belief that we are decent and caring human beings, mostly remained silent, inactive, and consequently complicit in Fascist crimes against humanity.

So why did most of us remain silent and inactive during last summer while Israel killed 2,191 Palestinians including 521 children and 297 women; while 142 Palestinian families lost three or more members in a single strike with a total of 739 fatalities and 1,500 children being orphaned; while 11,100 Palestinians were wounded including 3,374 children, 2,088 women, 410 elderly with an estimated 1,000 children suffering lifelong disabilities; while according to a UN estimate some 373,000 children were being so traumatised that they now require special psychological support; while 18,000 housing units were totally destroyed and approximately 108,000 Palestinians were made homeless; while according to a UN estimate some 485,000 Palestinians were displaced; while Israeli attacks caused widespread damage to Gaza's already frail and dilapidated electrical grid, run down and in disrepair after seven years of siege and blockade; while destruction of Gaza's power plant caused the shutdown of water treatment plants and Israeli tank fire put Gaza's largest sewage treatment plant out of commission; while 419 businesses and workshops were damaged, and 128 totally destroyed; and while according to a UN report "Hostilities forced farmers and herders to abandon their lands, and resulted in substantial direct damage to Gaza's 17,000 hectares [42,000 acres] of croplands as well as much of its agricultural infrastructure, including greenhouses, irrigation systems, animal farms, fodder stocks and fishing boats. Access to the sea was also prohibited for most of the 50 days of hostilities?"

SO WHY DID MOST OF US REMAIN SILENT AND INACTIVE? THE ANSWER IS SIMPLY BECAUSE WE FEARED BEING ACCUSED OF ANTI-SEMITISM.



Perhaps if more of us were to speak up and actively oppose having our justified concerns and criticisms gagged by pro-Israel Jewish lobby groups; perhaps if more of us were to challenge and if necessary even defy Jewish lobby inspired legislation criminalising criticism of Israel; perhaps if more of us were to reject politically correct hypocrisy and insist that national affairs be conducted to serve justice rather than the lobbied agendas of well financed special interest groups; Perhaps if more of us would honestly recognise that by idly standing by and allowing our political leaders to be blackmailed, bribed, and bullied into supporting the warmongering Apartheid state of Israel, we are forfeiting not only our own

legal and human rights to live in peaceful coexistence with others, but also the legal and human rights of future generations; perhaps then, and only then, will we be able to create a better world — a world where bigoted fanatical racist parasites do not thwart our hopes or control our destinies.

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