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PACBI Newsletter
Number 1
31 December 2009

The Year 2009 has proved to be a watershed in the growth of the global BDS movement. The massive lethal Israeli war of aggression on the Gaza Strip in late December 2008 and January 2009 galvanized many organized groups and individuals around the world to call for BDS actions as a means to end Israel's criminal impunity and disregard for international law.

The report of the UN Fact-Finding Mission led by Judge Richard Goldstone, released in September 2009, found strong evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the assault on the Palestinian people in Gaza, and called for holding Israel accountable before international law. That report, and the media attention given to it, moved the terms of international solidarity with Palestine into a new plane, where calling for BDS is no longer considered "unrealistic" or "counterproductive." BDS is emerging more strongly than ever as a key morally sound and politically realistic strategy for bringing an end to Israel's impunity and holding it accountable to the same international standards as other nations.

In Palestine, the BDS National Committee (BNC), established in April 2008, has emerged as the principal anchor of the global BDS movement. A wide civil society coalition representing major sectors of Palestinian society in the OPT, inside Israel (1948) and in exile, the BNC has played a leading role in initiating international action, giving advice to BDS activists around the world, and participating in national and international forums. PACBI, which is one of the founders of the BDS movement and a member of its leadership, the BNC, continues to be actively engaged in the global BDS movement, both locally and internationally, on the level of academic and cultural boycott. Members of PACBI's Steering Committee have participated in many conferences, workshops, lectures, and seminars around the world to promote BDS and form alliances within international civil society. PACBI has also issued a number of important reference documents; it continues to receive positive feedback and requests for advice from artists, academics and activists using this material. The PACBI website, with both English and Arabic pages, is a valuable source of information for BDS campaigns around the world, averaging 750,000 unique visits per year.

Global BDS movement achievements in 2009

Below are some highlights of the main achievements of the global BDS movement:

- The BDS coordination process, launched at the Bilbao Initiative meeting in November 2008, began showing tangible results in Europe in 2009. The *Derail Veolia/Alstom* campaign is a good example of the results of this important conference. This project targets the two French companies for their complicity in grave violations of international law (building and/or managing the Jerusalem Light Rail, which connects colonial settlements with Jerusalem), has already contributed significantly to denying Veolia contracts worth billions of dollars. The pressure against the two companies continues, with the BNC escalating the campaign to include direct appeals to Arab government to exclude both companies from public tenders until they divest completely from their illegal projects that violate international law and Palestinian rights.¹
- In December 2009, the Turkish BDS Platform was launched at a march of 500 people in Istanbul on the first anniversary of the lethal assault on Gaza. The Platform is composed of major Turkish trade unions and political organizations. The Platform demands an end to military, diplomatic, economic, academic, and cultural relations between Turkey and Israel.²
- The Students for Justice in Palestine at Hampshire College hosted a US-wide BDS student conference in November 2009 to organize and galvanize the growing divestment campaigns going on all over campuses in the U.S.³
- In November 2009, the second largest Dutch pension fund (PZFW) divested from Africa-Israel, which has been targeted internationally for its investments in companies that support settlement activity. Africa-Israel Investment is an Israeli international holding and investment company whose subsidiary, Danya Cebus, executed construction projects in the Israeli settlements of Modiin Illit, Maale Adumim, Har Homa and Adam. In addition, the company offers apartments and houses in various settlements in the West Bank through Anglo Saxon, the Israeli franchise of its real estate agency.⁴
- In November 2009, the National Work Confederation (Confédération Nationale du Travail or CNT), a French anti-capitalist internationalist union involved in social class struggles, joined the campaign for “Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions against the State of Israel.”⁵
- In September 2009, the Norwegian government decided to exclude the Israeli company Elbit Systems Ltd. from the Government Pension Fund – Global, on the

¹ For more on this campaign see: <http://www.jerusalemquarterly.org/ViewArticle.aspx?id=304>

² <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1140>

³ <http://stopthewall.org/worldwideactivism/2138.shtml>

⁴ <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/608>

⁵ <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/582>

basis of the Council on Ethics' recommendation. The Council on Ethics had found that investment in Elbit constitutes an unacceptable risk of contribution to serious violations of fundamental ethical norms as a result of the company's integral involvement in Israel's construction of a separation barrier on occupied territory.⁶

- In September 2009, the U.S. pension fund giant, TIAA-CREF, confirmed in statements to the media that it divested from Africa Israel Investments, owned by Israeli billionaire Lev Leviev earlier this year. The statements came in response to a letter initiated by Adalah-NY and signed by TIAA-CREF clients.⁷
- In June 2009, the Municipal Council for Cooperation of Bilbao joined the BDS Campaign. The Council is composed of 45 NGOs and the four political parties represented in the municipality.⁸
- In April 2009, The Scottish Trade Union Congress, representing all Scottish trade unions, voted overwhelmingly to commit to boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel, and thus became the third national trade union federation to commit to BDS.⁹
- The Boycott Motorola Campaign was launched in New York in March 2009. Motorola USA and its subsidiary Motorola Israel provide equipment to the Israeli military which include bomb fuses and surveillance for the Wall and settlements.¹⁰
- In February 2009, the Boycott Israeli Goods Campaign issued an international call to action against Carmel-Agrexco, the Israeli national exporter of fruit and vegetables and importer of large quantities of goods from illegal Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land.¹¹
- In January 2009, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) called on the Canadian government "to adopt a program of boycott, divestment and sanctions until Israel recognizes the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and complies with international law, including the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes as stipulated in UN resolution 194."¹²
- In February 2009, the Church of England announced that it had divested from Caterpillar, a company whose bulldozers and heavy plant equipment have been used to destroy the homes of Palestinians by the Israeli military.¹³

⁶ <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/533>

⁷ <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/542>

⁸ <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/562>

⁹ <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/376>

¹⁰ <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/352>

¹¹ <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/240>

¹² <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/255>

¹³ http://www.palestinecampaign.org/Index7b.asp?m_id=1&11_id=4&12_id=25&Content_ID=376

- In a milestone achievement, Hampshire College became the first college in the U.S. to divest from companies that profit from the Israeli occupation. This move, in February 2009, was a direct result of a two-year intensive campaign by the campus group, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP). The group pressured Hampshire College's Board of Trustees to divest from six companies due to human rights concerns in occupied Palestine. Over 800 students, professors, and alumni have signed SJP's "institutional statement" calling for the divestment.¹⁴

Academic Boycott Initiatives

A number of important international initiatives for academic boycott were launched in 2009, some based on the PACBI call for academic and cultural boycott, such as the recently established US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel¹⁵, the Catalan Commission of Universities for Palestine (CUNCAP, Comisio Universitari Catalana per Palestina),¹⁶ and other, still-developing academic boycott initiatives in Canada, the Basque Country (Spain), France and Australia.

- In September 2009, the Government of Spain excluded an Israeli university in the illegal settlement of Ariel, the "Ariel University Center of Samaria" (AUCS) from the Solar Decathlon, organized by both the Spanish Government and the Universidad Politécnic de Madrid. The event was a prestigious international university competition for sustainable architecture in the world.¹⁷
- One of the most important developments in the UK was the passing of an unprecedented number of boycott-related motions at the University College Union's (UCU) annual Congress in May. The UCU in the UK, representing over 100,000 academics and related staff in colleges and universities, passed a number of resolutions at its annual Congress in May 2009 in the direction of applying effective pressure on Israel and holding it accountable for its colonial and apartheid policies.¹⁸ Several of the UCU Congress resolutions on Palestine amounted to a clear decision to challenge the notion that Israel's complicit institutions, including the academy, can be "normal" partners of any self-respecting British institution.¹⁹
- An important development in winter and spring was the student campus "occupation" movement spearheaded by students in solidarity with Palestine across the UK. The message to university administrations and academics was unequivocal; there is no room for business-as-usual with Israel or its academic

¹⁴ <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/301>

¹⁵ <http://usacbi.wordpress.com/>

¹⁶ <http://cuncap.wordpress.com/>

¹⁷ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1105>

¹⁸ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1018&key=ucu>

¹⁹ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1018&key=ucu>

- institutions, and universities must take a stand, including divesting from companies implicated in Israel's occupation and atrocities.²⁰
- Two important research documents on Israeli academic institutions' complicity in maintaining the structures of domination were published in 2009: the report by the Alternative Information Center (AIC) entitled "The Economy of the Occupation" was intended "to inform and empower the debate on an academic boycott by giving information ... on the part played in the Israeli occupation by the very academic institutions in question. The report demonstrates that Israeli academic institutions have not opted to take a neutral, apolitical position toward the Israeli occupation but to fully support the Israeli security forces and policies toward the Palestinians, despite the serious suspicions of crimes and atrocities hovering over them. Any who argue either for or against an academic boycott against Israeli institutions, we believe, should know and consider not only facts regarding the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), but also the ways in which the Israeli academic institutions make political choices and actively take sides in the ongoing conflict."²¹ The second report, prepared by the Palestine Society at SOAS at University of London documented Tel Aviv University's collaboration with the Israeli military.²² The reports are based on significant evidence demonstrating that Israeli universities are inextricably linked to the security-military establishment in Israel and that they provide crucial research and information for the purpose of furthering the oppression of the Palestinian people.
 - A petition by Norwegian Academics from two universities in Trondheim in November 2009 urged support for the cultural and academic boycott of Israel, since "Israeli universities and other institutions of higher education have played a key role in the policy of oppression... We ask the boards of our institutions to approve an academic boycott of Israel... we refrain from participating in any kind of academic or cultural cooperation with Israeli institutions and their representatives until guaranties are issued that the occupation of Palestinian land will be terminated."²³
 - In May 2009 More than 40 Australian academics signed a statement calling for a boycott of Israeli academic and cultural institutions. The statement said: "There can be no academic freedom in Israel/Palestine unless all academics are free and all students are free to pursue their academic desires."²⁴
 - Several universities in Canada and the US—and over 40 cities across the world, from London to Jerusalem to Johannesburg-- hosted Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) in March 2009. IAW 2009 continued to build and strengthen the growing Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement at a global level.²⁵

²⁰ <http://www.actionpalestine.org/student-movement/university-occupations-over-gaza-by-mona-baker/>

²¹ http://www.alternativenews.org/images/stories/downloads/Economy_of_the_occupation_23-24.pdf

²² <http://www.electronicintifada.net/downloads/pdf/090708-soas-palestine-society.pdf>

²³ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1124>

²⁴ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=998&key=australian>

²⁵ www.apartheidweek.org

- In March 2009, a statement issued by Lebanese academics urged “colleagues, regionally and internationally, to oppose this ongoing "scholasticide" and to support the just demand for academic boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel. Specifically, we ask our colleagues worldwide to support the call by the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel to comprehensively and consistently boycott and disinvest from all Israeli academic and cultural institutions, and to refrain from participation in any form of academic and cultural cooperation, collaboration or joining projects with Israeli institutions as a contribution to the struggle to end Israel’s occupation, colonization and system of apartheid.”²⁶
- The Quebec College Federation, Fédération autonome du collégial (FAC), meeting in March 2009, declared that “FAC will concretize its solidarity with the Palestinian people by becoming part of the international campaign for boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israel, together with trade unions and social organizations that are committed in the same direction.”²⁷
- A statement by staff members of the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague in March 2009 proposed, amongst other measures “a critical (re)consideration of formal relationships with Israeli academic institutions and programmes” and called upon “all staff and the Institute Board of the ISS, academics, intellectuals and other relevant civil actors around the world to discuss and debate appropriate institutional responses to hold the Israeli government, military and other relevant institutions accountable for their denial of Israel’s international obligations, including human rights such as academic freedom. Such responses may include institutional boycotts as well as divestments from companies and programmes that directly contribute to violations of human rights and international (humanitarian) law.”²⁸
- CUPE-Ontario's University Workers Coordinating Committee (OUWCC) took significant steps at its annual conference in February 2009 in the direction of applying effective pressure on Israel and holding it accountable for its colonial and apartheid policies that violate international law and fundamental human rights. A number of the resolutions aimed specifically at challenging and ending business-as-usual with the Israeli academy. The conference voted to “[e]ncourage its member locals to hold public forums to discuss an academic boycott of Israeli academic institutions;” to “[a]sk campus representatives to work with locals to investigate both research and investment links between Ontario Universities and the state of Israel's military;” to “[m]obilize campus allies to pressure universities from engaging in acts of cooperation that assist and aid military research at the institutional level with Israeli universities;” to “[w]ork with campus and community allies to pressure Ontario universities to refuse collaborations, corporate partnerships and investments that would benefit, either directly or

²⁶ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=980&key=scholasticide>

²⁷ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=971>

²⁸ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1134>

indirectly, military research or the Israeli state military;” and to “[r]equest funding and support from CUPE Ontario to conduct an education campaign on the academic boycott, coordinate education sessions and assist in the implementation of resolution 50 as passed in 2006.”²⁹

- In February 2009, dozens of French academics issued a statement committing themselves “to cease all collaboration with Israeli institutions participating in the occupation, and declare our solidarity with those who in Israel struggle courageously for the human, social, and political rights of Palestinians.” They called upon their government to “apply to Israel a program of boycott, divestment, and sanctions.”³⁰
- In January 2009, the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel was launched. The campaign statement declared, “as educators of conscience, we have been unable to stand by and watch in silence Israel’s indiscriminate assault on the Gaza Strip and its educational institutions... This boycott should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law.”³¹ Today, over 500 US-based academics, authors, artists, musicians, poets, and other arts professionals have endorsed our call. Among the 34 organizations supporting USACBI’s mission are and the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, the Green Party, Code Pink, INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, Artists Against Apartheid, and Teachers Against the Occupation.³²
- A call by 300 Canadian academics and educators in January 2009 urged the Canadian government “to implement sanctions against the Israeli government until it ceases its attack against the people of Gaza and fully complies with international law;”³³ and a statement by a group of Quebec university staff declaring support for the appeal by the Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees (PFUUPE) to support a boycott of Israeli academic institutions.³⁴
- An Australian campaign in May 2009 focused specifically on a boycott of Israeli academic and cultural institutions, again based on the PACBI call; the organizers urged “colleagues, nationally, regionally, and internationally, to stand up against Israel’s ongoing attacks on the rights of Palestinians to education, land, and human dignity, and to support the non-violent call for academic boycott, disinvestment, and sanctions.”³⁵

²⁹ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=954&key=cupe>

³⁰ <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/307>

³¹ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=899>

³² <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/12/25/usacbi-statement-on-1-year-anniversary-of-operation-cast-lead/>

³³ <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/254>

³⁴ <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/275>

³⁵ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=998&key=australian>

- A petition from the University of Johannesburg faculty, staff, and community in October 2009 expressed “disagreement with the University’s decision to sign a scientific co-operation agreement with Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. We believe that this agreement is damaging to our university because it ignores the call of Palestinian civil society organisations to withhold co-operation from Israeli universities which co-operate in human rights abuses.”³⁶

Cultural Boycott Actions

- The widely publicized campaign against the Toronto International Film Festival's special tribute to Tel Aviv succeeded in gaining the support of notable artists, filmmakers, and intellectuals like Jane Fonda, Danny Glover, John Berger, Ken Loach, Alice Walker, among many others, to protest the spotlight’s intention to rebrand Israel in a positive light to the world in the wake of the atrocities it committed in the 2008-2009 war on Gaza. The Toronto Declaration in September 2009, signed by these artists and writers, among many others, declared: “we object to the use of such an important international festival in staging a propaganda campaign on behalf of what South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, and UN General Assembly President Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann have all characterized as an apartheid regime.”³⁷
- In August 2009, Amnesty International was successfully pressured, as a result of an effective campaign that lasted several weeks, to withdraw its support for a Leonard Cohen concert that was held in Israel in violation of the boycott guidelines. PACBI led this initiative, along with international partners.³⁸
- In August 2009, two international curators who were to participate in the planning of ArtTLV, an art biennial taking place in Israel in September, withdrew from the project after their Israeli counterparts refused to condemn Israel's war on Gaza and to arrange a symposium on art and war.³⁹
- In July 2009, the Yes Men announced that they decided to withdraw their film, "The Yes Men Fix the World," from the Jerusalem Film Festival in solidarity with the BDS campaign: “Today, there is a clear call for a boycott from Palestinian civil society. Obeying it is our only hope, as filmmakers and activists, of helping put pressure on the Israeli government to comply with international law.”⁴⁰
- In May 2009, the Edinburgh International Film Festival organizers announced that they were returning funds donated by the Israeli Embassy, admitting that it had been a mistake to accept the funds. Setting a precedent in applying the cultural boycott, the eminent British filmmaker, Ken Loach threatened to boycott

³⁶ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1118>

³⁷ <http://torontodeclaration.blogspot.com/>

³⁸ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1080&key=cohen>

³⁹ <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/1110830.html>

⁴⁰ <http://www.tikkun.org/article.php/20090701080625471>

the festival unless the organizers returned the contributions they had accepted from the Israeli embassy.⁴¹ In July 2009, Loach withdrew his film “Looking for Eric” from the Melbourne International Film Festival because the festival received funding from the Israeli government and refused to disassociate itself from the Israeli government.⁴²

- Palestine solidarity activists organized protests in the winter and spring in several major US and Canadian cities during the tour of the Tel-Aviv based Batsheva Dance Company. The company receives government funding, and is one of Israel’s prominent “cultural ambassadors.”⁴³

PACBI and the BDS Movement

In carrying out its work, PACBI has relied entirely on the voluntary efforts of its Steering Committee members and its supporters and partners, locally and internationally. The Steering Committee now includes members based in the West Bank, Gaza, Toronto, New York, London and Berlin.

In 2009, PACBI members spoke at seminars and conferences at several venues to promote BDS: in more than ten cities in the United States (including at six universities); in Canada; in several European cities including Amsterdam, the Hague, London, Manchester, Berlin, Madrid, Rome, and Brussels; and in Ireland, Scotland, and Turkey. These activities were organized by groups ranging from the Brussels Palestine Collective to Swiss NGO HEKS and the Dutch NGO United Civilians for Peace, to the Solidarity Association with the Palestinian People in Turkey (FHDD), to the huge French civil society coalition against Agrexco-Carmel, which includes five national parties and more than 85 NGOs, to the Scottish Trade Union Congress and the University and College Union (UCU) in the UK.

- In the UK, PACBI has continued its close cooperation with the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine (BRICUP), particularly in efforts that led to the passing of an unprecedented number of boycott-related motions at the UCU’s annual congress in 2009.⁴⁴ Throughout the debate over BDS at the UCU, PACBI worked closely with the Palestinian Federation of University Unions of Professors and Employees (PFUPE), whose President addressed the UCU annual congress to appeal for the adoption of the academic boycott of Israel. In December 2009, A PACBI representative gave a keynote address in an international, inter-union conference in London to promote BDS, organized by UCU. This was followed by a BRICUP-organized tour of several universities in the UK by PACBI and leaders from the African National Congress (ANC) and COSATU to explain and advocate for BDS in general and academic/cultural boycott in particular.

⁴¹ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1011&key=edinburgh>

⁴² <http://www.greenleft.org.au/2009/804/41365>

⁴³ An example from Los Angeles: <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=956&key=batsheva>

⁴⁴ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1018&key=ucu>

- PACBI has also contributed to the debate on academic boycott in the UK through its contribution of a monthly column in the BRICUP newsletter, of which 22 issues have been published since February 2008.⁴⁵
- In the United States, where BDS efforts are making great progress, a PACBI representative, speaking on behalf of the BNC, delivered the opening address at the U.S. Campus BDS Conference at Hampshire College in November 2009. PACBI had also helped the student organizers in formulating the conference's objectives and focus.
- A PACBI member gave the keynote speech and led a workshop at the highly successful Wooler BDS Weekend in October 2009. The weekend was organized by the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign together with the Northern Palestine Solidarity Network and held on the Scottish border.

A number of vital statements and basic reference documents were produced by PACBI for use by boycott activists. These and other efforts include:

- Issuing over 30 statements and appeals, posted on the PACBI website and circulated among concerned parties;⁴⁶
- PACBI in Gaza was instrumental in launching the Palestinian Students' Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PSCABI) there.⁴⁷ PACBI is also playing the key role in galvanizing civil society support for BDS in Gaza and in promoting civil resistance through media interviews, public lectures and many meetings with civil society representatives.
- Issuing two important reference documents, “Guidelines for the International Cultural Boycott of Israel”⁴⁸ and “Guidelines for the International Academic Boycott of Israel.”⁴⁹ PACBI also issued “Implementing the Academic Boycott: Individuals vs. Institutions,”⁵⁰ another effort to respond to requests for information and advice regularly coming in to PACBI.
- In December 2009, PACBI organized a meeting in Ramallah to discuss cultural boycott with Palestinian cultural centers and cultural workers. Over 60 representatives of cultural organizations and associations participated in a lively debate on the specifics of applying the cultural boycott against Israel in Palestinian relations with the Arab World. A major reference document on the guidelines of Arab artists and intellectuals visits to the occupied Palestinian territory will be issued as a result of this meeting.

⁴⁵ <http://www.bricup.org.uk/index.html>

⁴⁶ See PACBI Statements and Open Letters here: <http://www.pacbi.org/einside.php?id=55>

⁴⁷ <http://pscabi.org/>

⁴⁸ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1047>

⁴⁹ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1108>

⁵⁰ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1125>

- In June 2009, PACBI co-organized the workshop “Education in Palestine between the Peace Industry and the Culture of Resistance” with the Qattan Foundation and the Teacher Creativity Centre in Ramallah. Three PACBI members gave presentations at this well-attended workshop, and the papers are to be published and disseminated shortly.
- In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, PACBI members have spoken at workshops and events in Gaza, Bethlehem, Hebron, Qalqilya, among other cities and towns. PACBI organized a special panel on the Culture of Resistance and BDS at the Bil’in Annual Conference on Popular Resistance in April 2009. The panel featured a South African trade union leader, a leading Palestinian cultural worker and a PACBI representative. The panel stirred a lively discussion and debate among the hundreds of internationals, Palestinians and progressive Israelis in attendance.