

## **Resolution #2 Resolution to Boycott Israeli Academic Institutions**

*Whereas*, For decades, despite condemnation by the United Nations and other international bodies, the Israeli state has denied Palestinians -- including scholars and students -- their fundamental rights of freedom, equality, and self-determination through ethnic cleansing, colonization, discrimination, and military occupation;

*Whereas*, The United States plays a decisive role in enabling Israel's systematic violations of Palestinians' basic rights under international law, and U.S. academic institutions facilitate Israeli academic institutions' complicity by continuing to maintain close, extensive and privileged ties with them; and *whereas* the AAA is a leading U.S.-based academic association;

*Whereas*, Anthropological frameworks and methods, ethnographic and archaeological, are actively used by the Israeli state to further occupation and colonization; and *whereas* the AAA has committed in its Statement of Purpose to "Take action on behalf of the entire profession" and "Promote the... constant improvement of professional standards in anthropology;"

*Whereas*, The AAA's 1999 Declaration on Anthropology and Human Rights states, "Anthropology as a profession is committed to the promotion and protection of the right of people and peoples everywhere to the full realization of their humanity" and "the AAA has an ethical responsibility to protest and oppose... deprivation;" and *whereas* the AAA has historically upheld those rights, including the right to education and academic freedom, for peoples around the world;

*Whereas*, Israel has obstructed Palestinians' right to education by destroying Palestinian universities and schools in military strikes; periodically raiding and forcing those institutions to close; preventing Palestinian anthropologists from freely studying their own society; preventing Palestinian archaeologists from accessing, studying, stewarding, or protecting their own cultural heritage; and restricting Palestinians' movement which limits their ability to attend and work at universities, travel to conferences, and study abroad;

*Whereas*, The Israeli state and universities systematically deny Palestinian students in Israeli educational institutions rights and resources equal to their Jewish Israeli counterparts;

*Whereas*, Israeli scholars and students who criticize Israeli state policies and who support the academic boycott of Israeli institutions do so under threat of sanction;

*Whereas*, Israel routinely harasses and imposes severe restrictions on foreign academics seeking to attend conferences or conduct research in the occupied Palestinian territories, as well as on scholars of Palestinian origin who wish to travel to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories;

*Whereas*, Israeli academic institutions have been directly and indirectly complicit in the Israeli state's systematic maintenance of the occupation and denial of basic rights to Palestinians, by providing planning, policy, and technological expertise for furthering Palestinian dispossession; and

*Whereas*, The vast majority of Palestinian civil society organizations, including the

Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors, have called for an international boycott of Israeli academic institutions as part of the broader boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement; now, therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the AAA as an Association endorses and will honor this call from Palestinian civil society to boycott Israeli academic institutions until such time as these institutions end their complicity in violating Palestinian rights as stipulated in international law; and

*Resolved*, That the AAA leadership, in accord with the governance procedures of the Association's bylaws, is charged with implementing this boycott and determining how to do so with reference to both (a) the Association's own mission, and (b) the attached appendix; and

*Resolved*, That this boycott pertains to Israeli academic institutions only and not to individual scholars, and also that individual anthropologists are free to determine whether and how they will apply the boycott in their own professional practice; and

*Resolved*, That in implementing this boycott, the AAA will support the rights of students and scholars everywhere to engage in research and public speaking about Israel/Palestine and in support of the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement.

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Background for the Resolution For decades, Israel's colonization of Palestine and the accompanying widespread and systematic abuses it has committed have been a matter of public record, extensively documented by the United Nations and leading human rights organizations. These have included violations of academic freedom and the right to education. Israeli academic institutions are party to these abuses.

An academic boycott has an important role to play in pressuring Israel to end these abuses. Israel stands apart from other states that routinely engage in mass human rights abuses due to the level of support it receives from the United States. At the governmental level, Israel is the leading recipient -- in absolute and per capita terms -- of official U.S. aid, much of which goes to purchase weapons used to oppress, maim, and kill Palestinians. More than with any other country, the U.S. regularly thwarts any concerted action at the United Nations to curb Israel's abuses, in the face of near- universal condemnation by the international community. Furthermore, Israel enjoys extensive ties with academic and cultural institutions in the U.S. As a result, Israel depends on the U.S. not only for diplomatic and military aid, but also for its sense of legitimacy in the face of international condemnation.

The academic boycott is an act of protest against Israel's violations and an act of solidarity with our Palestinian colleagues. It is also a rejection of the support that the U.S. government provides Israel, enabling it to act with impunity. Israel's dependence on the U.S. makes it vulnerable to popular pressure, such as boycotts, from U.S. organizations. Boycott functions by making complicity with the status quo burdensome for Israeli

academic institutions. It provides a concrete and proven way that scholars can participate in amplifying that pressure. The academic boycott has also already prompted conversation and learning among many in the United States, Israel/Palestine, and elsewhere. The extraordinary efforts of the Israeli state and organizations opposed to criticism of Israel to counteract the boycott are signs that it is effective.

As a discipline with origins inextricably tied to the history of colonialism, anthropologists are well-placed to recognize and speak out against colonial practices, especially when they are supported by our government and within our society. The AAA has taken strong stances against such violations of rights in the past, via resolutions as well as boycotts. Boycotts have been effective in similar struggles for liberation and justice, including in apartheid South Africa. This boycott is called for by over 170 Palestinian civil society organizations, including all Palestinian universities. Several other U.S.-based academic associations have endorsed the boycott, including the American Studies Association, the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, the Association of Asian American Studies, the Critical Ethnic Studies Association, the Peace and Justice Studies Association, and the Association for Humanist Sociology. All of these associations remain perfectly healthy - financially, legally, and in terms of membership numbers - after doing so. The National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies passed a boycott resolution at their April 2015 conference, and discussion of the boycott continues at the National Women's Studies Association, the Modern Languages Association, and elsewhere.

#### Implementation of the Boycott

This resolution calls for the AAA -- as an Association -- to implement an academic boycott of Israeli institutions. If the boycott is adopted, the AAA will refrain from any formal collaborations or other relationships with Israeli academic institutions, including the Israeli Anthropological Association. There are no such relationships at this time, so adopting the boycott would formalize the current status quo in this regard.

The resolution applies to academic institutions *only*. Israeli scholars will still be welcome to participate in AAA meetings, use funds from their institutions to attend the meetings, publish in AAA journals, and take part in other AAA activities in their individual capacities. The boycott does not preclude communication and collaboration with individual Israeli scholars. Indeed, one of its goals is to encourage dialogue about human and academic rights in Israel/Palestine grounded in a set of shared principles of justice.

This resolution does not impose any requirements on AAA members acting in their individual capacities. Under this resolution, individual members will remain free to make their own decisions about whether or not to support the boycott in their own professional practice, such as whether to accept Israeli grants, attend conferences in Israel, or publish in Israeli journals.

The boycott would affect Israeli institutions in the following ways: those institutions would not be able to be listed in AnthroGuide, advertise in AAA venues, or participate in the AAA Departmental Services Program (DSP), the Career Center, or the Graduate School Fair. In addition, the boycott precludes granting permission to copy and reprint articles from AAA publications to journals and publications based at Israeli institutions.

The boycott may also preclude the AAA from selling Anthrosource access to Israeli institutions. However, *individual* AAA members from Israel would still have access to Anthrosource through their personal membership. Permanent residents of Israel qualify for AAA membership at the rate for "Less Developed Countries," which is \$US 30 per year.

This is the same rate that applies to Palestinians in Israel/Palestine as well as in the broader Middle East/North Africa region.

We anticipate that endorsing the boycott will have minimal financial ramifications for the AAA. Currently, there are no Israeli institutional members of the DSP, so there will be no financial losses in that regard. Other academic associations that have adopted the boycott have seen their membership numbers *increase* and none of those associations have sustained significant legal costs. If the boycott is adopted, the AAA leadership would be entrusted to determine how best to proceed in order to ensure its implementation to the greatest extent possible while maintaining the financial viability of the Association.