

CUNY Law BDS Resolution Fact Sheet

By Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and the Jewish Law Students Association (JLSA)

What is this resolution?

- This resolution calls on CUNY to cut all ties with institutions and organizations, and divest from corporations, that are complicit in Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people.
- This resolution also calls for CUNY to end its complicity in the ongoing censorship, harassment, and intimidation of Palestine solidarity activists, including through ending contracts, academic collaborations, and refusing to be complicit in the targeted harassment and silencing of Palestine solidarity activists

Why Divest?

- Israel systematically engages in racist human rights atrocities against Palestinians.
- To name a few examples: Israel routinely denies Palestinians [access to clean water](#), and 4.9 million Palestinians face daily [restrictions](#) on their [movement](#). Israel has demolished more than [130,000 Palestinian homes and structures since 1948](#) and [600,000 Jewish Israeli settlers](#) are illegally living on occupied Palestinian land. Israel treats Palestinians within Israel as [second-class citizens](#) and uses military force to crush political dissent – including [extrajudicial killings](#), the [incarceration of Palestinian children](#), and torture and inhumane [detention](#) conditions.

What is BDS?

- BDS is a response to these injustices. It seeks to apply economic pressure on Israel, in order to make it more difficult for Israel to continue its oppression of Palestinians
- The global [Boycott Divestment and Sanctions \(BDS\)](#) campaign intends to dismantle Israel's violent occupation of Palestinian lands, while working to protect the rights of all Palestinian citizens of Israel and demanding the full right of return of Palestinian refugees as dictated by international law.
- In pursuing these ends, BDS calls on companies, institutions and governments around the world to change policies and divest from companies that bolster the structures of occupation and apartheid.
- Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid divestment movement in the 1970s and 1980s, divestment is an effective tactic that has been used in a variety of social movements. For example, campuses across the country have [divested from fossil fuels to combat climate change](#), and have divested from [prisons](#) and [policing](#) to combat criminalization and mass incarceration.

Why at CUNY?

- Despite a stated institutional commitment to social justice, CUNY continues to be complicit in Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people

- For example, [as of 2014](#), CUNY had close to \$1.1 million invested in companies profiting off of Israeli war crimes, including weapons manufacturers ([Boeing](#)¹, [General Electric](#)², [Lockheed Martin](#)³, [Northrop Grumman](#)⁴, and [Raytheon](#)⁵), tech and security companies (including [Hewlett-Packard Enterprise](#)⁶, [G4S](#)⁷, and [Motorola Solutions](#)⁸), and construction firms (including [Caterpillar](#)⁹ and [Cemex](#)¹⁰)¹¹. In addition, in Fiscal Year 20-21, CUNY had over \$8.5 million USD¹² in contracts with companies that aid in or profit from Israeli colonization, occupation, and war crimes, including [Dell](#)¹³, [IBM](#)¹⁴, [HP](#), [Lenovo](#)¹⁵, [Cisco](#)¹⁶, and [BMC Software](#).¹⁷
- Palestinian students and solidarity activists have faced censorship, harassment and repression on CUNY campuses.¹⁸ From 2011-2015, an NYPD officer even [infiltrated](#)

¹ Boeing is one of the largest military companies in the world, and makes fighter jets and missile systems used by the Israeli air force against Palestinian civilians.

² General Electric's aviation division manufactures engines for military aircraft Israel uses against civilians.

³ Lockheed Martin is a US defense and aerospace company that makes fighter jets, attack helicopters, and missile systems used by the Israeli military against Palestinian civilians.

⁴ Northrop Grumman is one of the largest military companies in the world. It develops missile systems consistently used by the Israeli air force against Palestinian civilians.

⁵ Raytheon is one of the largest military companies in the world and the largest producer of guided missiles used by Israeli military against Palestinians.

⁶ HP provides and operates technology used by the Israeli military, and provides servers used in surveillance technology that tracks the movement of Palestinians and maintains segregation.

⁷ G4S is a private security company involved in the training of Israeli police.

⁸ Motorola is a leading supplier of license plate recognition software whose equipment is installed in illegal settlements and in the separation wall in the West Bank, and is used by the Israeli military, police, and prison service.

⁹ Caterpillar's equipment is customized for the use of the needs of the Israeli military occupation and is used in home demolitions, the construction of the West Bank and Gaza walls, and the construction of illegal settlements

¹⁰ Cemex has factories in the occupied West Bank and Golan Heights and provides building materials to construction projects in illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank.

¹¹ For more information, see: <https://investigate.afsc.org/occupations>.

¹² New York State Office of the State Comptroller, Bureau of Contracts Procurement Stewardship Act Report for FY 2020-2021

<https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/state-agencies/contracts/2020/pdf/psa-centralized-contracts-2020.pdf>

¹³ Michael Dell, CEO of Dell Technologies, is an Israel backer who supported Texas governor Greg Abbott in passing HB 89, the anti-BDS law, which prohibits the state from doing business with any companies or individual contractors who boycott Israel.

¹⁴ IBM runs the discriminatory Israeli population registry and provides technologies to the Israeli military.

¹⁵ The electronics giant has an R&D center in Israel.

¹⁶ The US-based networking hardware company established a network of "digital hubs" in partnership with the Israeli government, some of them in occupied territories.

¹⁷ The US/Texas-based software company has an R&D center in Israel, and receives financial support from U.S.-Israel Binational Foundations.

¹⁸ In 2020, a Palestinian law student was the target of a concerted harassment effort. In response to calls for her expulsion from CUNY Law that were instigated by Act.il, an app with ties to Israel's intelligence and military apparatus, CUNY Law responded with a statement condemning "antisemitism"; the school later took down the statement. In July 2021, the school issued a [formal statement](#), believed to be the first of its kind condemning the harassment this student and others received.

In 2019, CUNY launched an investigation into CUNY Law's partnership with Defense for Children International-Palestine (DCIP) after a right-wing group falsely accused DCIP of having links to "terrorism." In 2018, CUNY canceled a Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) event titled 'The General's

Brooklyn College, “converted” to Islam, and surveilled students and Palestine solidarity organizing.

- CUNY also participates in academic collaborations and exchanges with Israeli institutions that are complicit by developing military hardware, weapons, drones, and surveillance technologies, offering military training courses and posts for high-ranking military officers, discriminating against Palestinian students, and repressing voices in support of Palestinians and their struggle for self-determination

What about accusations that BDS is antisemitic?

- It is not inherently antisemitic to critique and even oppose Israel.
- Not all Jewish people are Zionists, and not all Zionists are Jewish. Although Israel falsely purports to speak for all Jewish people, Zionism and Judaism are not the same thing.
- We oppose all settler-colonial states, land dispossession, and borders that hinder migration, separate families, and maintain racial capitalism. We also recognize the importance of coalescing around concrete political demands, and we support the clear and consistent call from Palestinians to secure their human rights through coalitional support for BDS.

Son: The Transformation of an Israeli in Palestine’ over fears the event would be controversial.

In 2018, CUNY investigated a doctoral student for comments made that were criticizing Israel in response to an email advertising a Fulbright fellowship in Israel on a student listserv.

In 2016, CUNY conducted a major investigation into Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), after the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) accused SJP of creating a hostile environment for Jewish students, and sought to have SJP banned at CUNY. The final report cleared SJP of wrongdoing, found that acts of antisemitism could not be attributable to SJP, and found no support for the claim that Jewish students had left CUNY because of antisemitism.

In 2011, Brooklyn College rescinded an academic appointment of a faculty member who supported Palestinian human rights.