

THE BIG PHONE BLOCKADE DOC

Example used throughout the document: https://linktr.ee/bny_blockade

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Set up your own phone blockade for Palestine!

Who can organise one?

Anyone! Have you got a society you're a part of that want to help the Palestinian movement? Or a sports team? Or just a big group of friends? Phone blockades can be organised quickly and require a very short time commitment from each person on the day if enough people are involved. They are also accessible to people who are unable to attend mid-week office occupations due to jobs, accessibility requirements or location. People all over the country can participate!

What is a phone blockade?

A phone blockade is when a group of people come together to jam the phone lines of an organisation and make it clear that it is being done due to their unforgivable role in the genocide of the Palestinian people. Participants sign up to time slots during which they repeatedly phone the organisation's phone number(s) and if anyone picks up, they read a script about why they are phoning and what they want the outcome to be (e.g. divestment, eviction).

Why is this necessary?

The aim of the blockade is to demonstrate the overwhelming public support for Palestine and to disrupt the business of the targeted organisation in order to encourage immediate divestment from Israel and its genocidal war machine. Unfortunately, organisations invested in Israel typically are aware of and do not care about Israel's atrocities, so disruption to their business is what they are most concerned with.

What needs to be done in advance?

1. Pick one organisation to target. It is best to select only one to cause maximum disruption, rather than a mild disruption to many.
2. Select a weekday. Offices are typically more productive earlier in the week, so you may cause more of a disruption for example on a Tuesday than a Friday.
3. Create a guidance document (as detailed in the 'Guidance Document' section) to give the numbers for the targeted offices. Give back-up numbers for participants to call if they are unable to get through. Please see the 'picking your phone numbers' section below for more information. Please see the 'sign up platform' section for more details on which platform to set this up.
4. Create a spreadsheet for allocating time slots and leaving feedback in the notes section (as detailed in the 'Spreadsheet' section). Please see the 'sign up platform' section for more details on which platform to set this up.
5. Create a Linktree to share all the relevant links to the instructions/ sign up etc.
6. Announce your phone blockade to potential participants! Further details given in the 'Announcing' section.

Picking your phone numbers

You need to pick a phone number that is going to be your top priority number, then some back up numbers to move onto if the top

You ideally want phone numbers that are customer facing (whether this be the general public or specifically clients/ investors etc.). Blockading these means that there is a direct disruption to their business, and they cannot change the phone number if they learn of the phone blockade in advance without making the change public.

Be cautious of customer service numbers as they typically are directed to a call centre instead of an internal organisation number, so this means they are extremely well-manned so hard to shut down, and are less effective as you are talking to externally contracted people instead of employees of the targeted organisation. This means there will be less complaints from employees and they won't need to send out any company-wide or department-wide internal emails telling people what to say if we phone.

For example for AXA, the office phone lines were the best to use as they went to the receptionist physically in the office building, meaning that other employees would be aware of what was happening too. Also when they disconnected the phone line entirely it went to an automated directory where you could select extensions for different departments, in order to reach as many employees as possible.

However for BNY, we found that the national 'client' lines and 'industrial investor' lines which were both located in their headquarters in London were better to use as the office numbers for BNY are not ones customers would phone as BNY is not a general public customer facing company in the same way as AXA is.

Multiple branches

Multiple offices of the same organisation can be targeted simultaneously depending on how many participants are expected to sign up. Participants should sign up to only one phone number (at a time), so that all the top priority phone numbers are covered by someone at all times.

Back up numbers

Typically if the phone is answered they will hang up mid-sentence. Participants should continue to ring back repeatedly during their time slot to jam the lines. If they disconnect the line, other phone numbers should be offered as back up to start targeting instead. If you are running a multi city/ branch blockade, the back up numbers can just be to help the other branches with their blockades. Or alternative numbers can be offered.

If the phone line goes to voicemail, encourage participants to leave a voicemail by reading the script (or something similar). Then refocus on the next phone number in the priority list. The top priority phone numbers should still be tried occasionally throughout the day in-case they are re-connected.

The inclusion of building managers encourages divestment of the targeted organisation both by disruption to their business caused by jamming their phone lines, and by the risk of eviction by the jamming of their office building managers phone lines in connection to the targeted organisation.

However if you can find alternative numbers for the targeted organisation it is better to use them instead to directly cause disruption to the organisation. For example their client or investors number, or the office number of an alternative branch. If you know anyone in the company, they may be able to tell you the most effective phone numbers to target, including phone numbers used internally by employees. For example with AXA we had the 'peoples services number' as a back up, which was for internal employees to use for HR related requests. This was good as it caused disruption for more employees in the company, meaning that more had to be alerted as to what was happening.

Linktree

Create a Linktree that includes the links to:

- The instructions (Notepin)
- The sign up form (Airtable)
- The feedback form (Airtable)
- The timeslot spreadsheet (google) – read only link

All the links above are explained in the sections below.

Sending a Linktree instead of direct URLs to these pages means that if something goes wrong with the spreadsheet (i.e. you shared the edit link instead of read only or visa versa), then you can change the links without it affecting any call out messages already sent out. This is particularly important if you are using Cryptpad as sometimes files on Cryptpad will randomly get corrupted.

For some reason Notepin web links don't work on Linktree so you'll need to put it into a shorten URL converter and use that URL for the Linktree. Here's the one we use:

<https://www.shorturl.at>

Here's an example Linktree:

https://linktr.ee/bny_blockade

Guidance Document

Platform

This is a read-only document, so you don't need to worry about people being able to collaborate on it. Although Cryptpad is often used for this, we recommend the online blog platform Notepin. Notepin is an online blog that you can set up without requiring any of your details (e.g. email etc) and views nicely on a phone as well as a laptop.

Pros of Notepin:

- You can set up without requiring any of your details (e.g. email etc) so it cannot be traced back to you (as can Cryptpad).
- It looks good when viewed on a phone as well as a laptop, whereas Cryptpad can be very clunky and difficult to navigate.
- Cryptpad seems to struggle to load up on Safari sometimes and has a tendency to crash at inopportune times, whereas Notepin has so far been very reliable.

Cons of Notepin:

- Cannot add photos.
- Limited font formats.
- Cannot contain hyperlinks to other pages.
- If you make a change to the blog post, if people opened the page before the change then they will have to refresh the page to see the changes. Hence why we write in the instructions to refresh the page on the day in case we add new phone numbers or instructions to the phone number section.

How to set a Notepin up:

1. Go to <https://notepin.co>
2. Click 'get started for free'.
3. It will come up with 'My First Post!'. Change the title to 'Guidance' as this will automatically make the web page '/guidance' in the URL.
4. Click publish straight away to get the blog setup, you can come back to change the post into the guidance document afterwards.
5. Create a username which will be the URL for the address, so we tend to pick e.g. 'axa_blockade'. Enter a password you will remember. You can put a recovery email in if you have one not attached to any of your personal details.
6. Now you'll be at your blog user interface! You do not need to change any of your blog bio etc as you will be linking directly to the guidance blog post rather than your home page. Click the guidance document to edit it to add your instructions. Click 'publish' each time you're finished to save your changes.
7. Click 'view your blog' in the top left then navigate to your guidance page to copy the web link for your instructions.

Contents

Your guidance document should contain:

1. An explanation for what you are doing and why.
2. Instructions on taking part in the phone blockade.
3. Phone numbers to call.
4. Scripts to read over the phone. Different scripts may be required depending on the phone recipients, for example the script to read to the building managers will want to request that the organisation you are blockading are evicted.

An example document can be found here:

https://bny_blockade.notepin.co/phone-blockade-instructions

If made on Cryptpad or another document platform, the shared link should be read-only so that it cannot be messed with (either accidentally or intentionally).

Encourage participants to sign up to multiple time-slots if they can. If they are unable to commit to a time, encourage them to still phone in whenever they can and sign up under 'Randomly' so that you have an idea of how many people participated.

Tell participants to enter '141' before the phone number if they wish to hide their phone number from those they are ringing. This is only for the UK, other numbers are used in other countries.

Encourage participants to leave feedback. This should be used to report back (e.g. if they got through or if a phone line is disconnected).

Signing up/ Leaving Feedback

There are two ways to set up the sign process. Feedback on the day is left using the same method. This document details the new method we have been using which we have found works a lot better. Examples of everything involved can be found in the example linktree given in the Linktree section.

Methods

The summary of each method is described below to explain the rational for the new method, however if you aren't interested you can skip to the 'setting up' section below.

Old method:

What	Uses Cryptpad (or google docs) to sign up on an editable online spreadsheet of time-slots.
Pros	Does not require someone monitoring it during the sign up process. Once it has been created, participants can add their sign up and feedback during the blockade themselves.
Cons	<p>Cryptpad sucks. It crashes a lot, it struggles to load up often, when you open spreadsheets up on a phone it automatically brings this pop-up box that covers up the entire spreadsheet which tends to put people off signing up, and even once you close it it's hard to use on a phone. Also, as it is an editable document, people can accidentally/ on purpose delete all the entries etc.</p> <p>You can use a google document instead however then participants will require a google account to edit the spreadsheet - which is difficult to create without information tying it back to the participants personal information. Also, to edit a google spreadsheet on a phone it requires you to download the 'sheets' app.</p>

New method:

What	A read-only google spreadsheet is used to share the sign ups (i.e. which time-slots are low on people). Sign-ups are done via an Airtable form.
Pros	MUCH more user friendly as you do not have to deal with all the problems with Cryptpad. The sign-up sheet also cannot be tampered with.
Cons	You require someone to keep an eye on the Airtable form entries and manually fill in the signups on the google spreadsheet. It is also slightly less streamlined as you need to sign up via a separate link than where you can see which time-slots are free, however we have still found we get significantly more signups using this method.

Setting up the time-slots sheet

Create a spreadsheet on google sheets (ideally using an account not tied to your personal information). Check the example one in the linktree given above to see the format.

Timeslots of 15 minutes during office hours (typically 9am – 5pm, however look it up). Include a 'Randomly' row before the time-slots so that people who cannot commit to a specific time but will still participate are recorded.

Include the targeted phone number and back up numbers at the top, with notes beside saying which ones are the priority. These notes can be changed on the day if a phone line is closed down e.g. 'This number is the priority! Move onto the other numbers if this line is engaged / down.' or 'This number has been shut down by us! Occasionally call to check it's still shut down'.

A formula has been used in the example sheet provided which counts the sign ups entered into the 'Names/ Alias' column split up by a comma. This helps people see which time-slots need filling still and encourages people to still sign up even if theres one person in every time-slot already, as ideally for a blockade to work well we want multiple people calling the number at the same time to jam the lines.

Alias' or initials are recommended if the spreadsheet is public, rather than full names.

Add another tab to share Feedback.

Multiple city sign up sheets

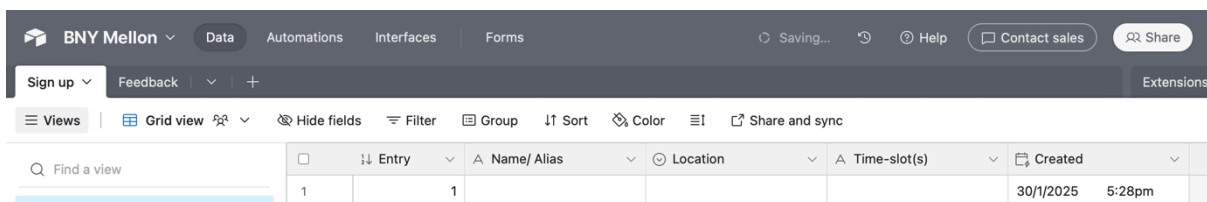
If the phone blockade is being ran with multiple cities/ multiple groups targeting different branches, different time-slots sheets should be provided for each branch. Backup numbers can be the same for multiple branches. If one city gets their numbers shut down you can always direct them to help out another city with their line by changing the phone numbers here and in the instructions on the day.

If you get to the night before and you don't have enough sign ups to effectively blockade the line all day, you may want to combine the sign ups from multiple cities into the same spreadsheet and all target the same number to be more effective.

If one city has two branches of the targeted organisation and want to target both, you can put two columns but encourage participants to only sign up to one instead of swapping between them during their timeslot, as we want someone consistently calling each number during any timeslot.

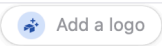
Sign up/ Feedback forms - How to set up an airtable

1. Create a 'workspace' – essentially just a folder to contain your data tables. Call it whatever you like. This will probably be the first thing they prompt you to do by clicking the blue 'Create +' button then selecting 'start from scratch'.
2. Make a 'Sign up' Table. Airtable will automatically make you a table with the name in the tab at the top called 'Table 1'. Change this to 'Sign up' to avoid confusion for others looking at it.



3. Change the columns to the following (as in pic above):
 - a. Entry – click 'edit field' – change to 'Autonomer'.

- b. Name/ Alias – change to ‘Single line text’. Enter the default as ‘xxx’.
 - c. (Only relevant if targeting multiple cities/ branches) Location (or Branch) – change to ‘Multiple select’, click the ‘+ Add Option’ button below and add the branches you are targeting for your drop-down list.
 - d. Timeslot(s) – change to ‘Single line text’. Enter the default as ‘Randomly’.
 - e. Created – change to ‘Created time’.
4. Select the ‘Forms’ page along the top (as in pic above). Select ‘New form’ then ‘Create form’.
 5. Change the settings to look like the below:



BNY Mellon Phone Blockade Sign Up Form!

This is just so we have an idea on numbers participating!

Are you able to commit to a time-range (e.g. 11-11:30)? Tell us here! Otherwise just leave it blank and call whenever you're able to.

Write anything for your name/ alias, this is just so you can find yourself on the spreadsheet if you forget what time you signed up for.

Name/ Alias

Location

UK
▼

Time-slot(s)

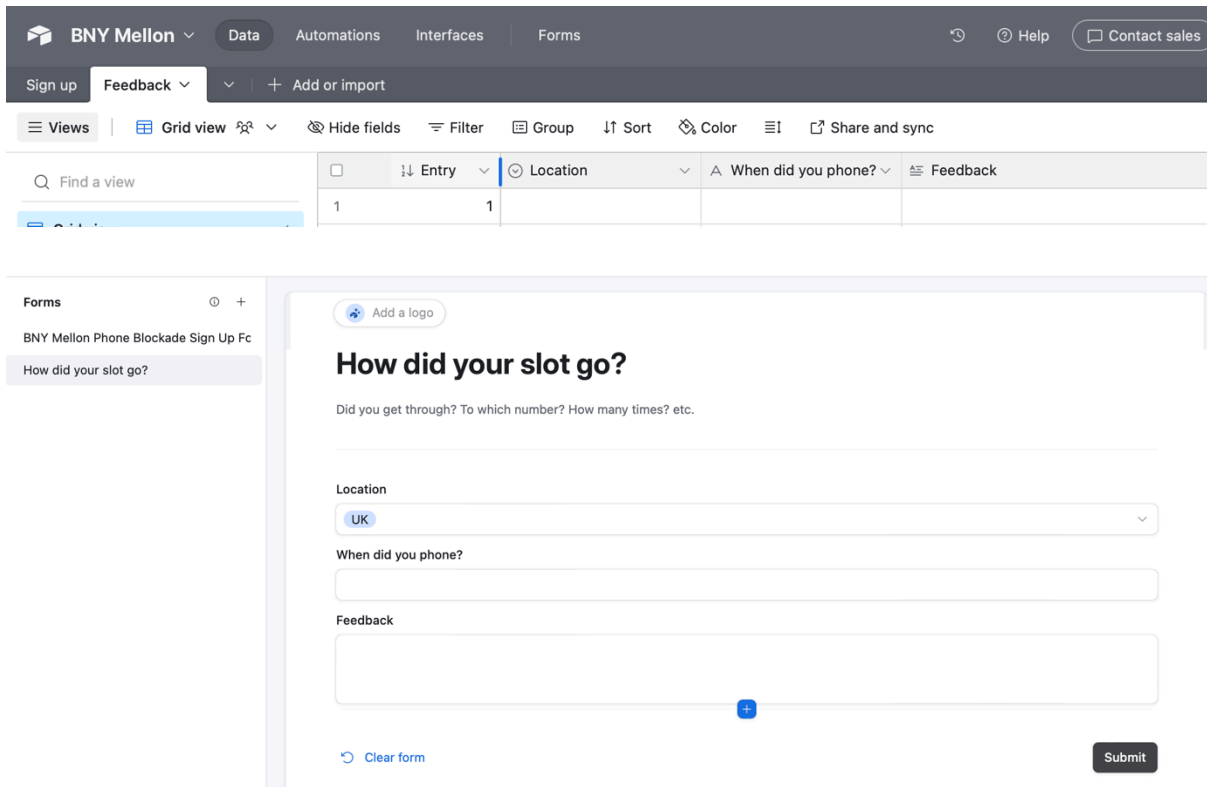
+

↻ Clear form
Submit

Do not submit passwords through this form. [Report malicious form](#)



6. Click ‘publish form’ along the top.
7. On the ‘Share form’ pop up, change to ‘Anyone on the web’, then click the ‘copy link’ button to copy the url to put into your linktree.
8. Click the ‘View Data’ button along the top to go back to the ‘Data’ page.
9. Click the ‘+’ button along your tabs on the top to add a ‘Feedback’ table.
10. Repeat steps 3 – 7 to create the feedback table with the fields below:
 - a. Entry – click ‘edit field’ – change to ‘Autonumber’.
 - b. (Only relevant if targeting multiple cities/ branches) Location (or Branch) – change to ‘Multiple select’, click the ‘+ Add Option’ button below and add the branches you are targeting for your drop-down list.
 - c. When did you phone? – change to ‘Single line text’.
 - d. ‘Feedback’ – change to ‘Long text’.
 - e. Created – change to ‘Created time’.



Announcing

There's two schools of thought as to when to announce, so it's up to your discretion. You can either:

1. Announce the plan for the phone blockade in secure networks a few days in advance. The public announcement is left to the night before, after office hours have ended. This means that the targeted organisation will not have time to prepare if they hear about it! However, if you are relying on the public announcement to run your phone blockade this may not be ideal.
2. Announce the blockade on public groups/ social media in advance. The targeted organisation will be able to prepare for it, however if it is a phone number meant for customers then they cannot change it and let the customers know without letting us also know! Or they can disconnect the phone lines, which is a big disruption for them in itself, and you can always change the specific phone numbers you're targeting at the last minute anyway.

If you want other cities or groups involved, it is best to get them on board in advance instead of relying on them reposting the call out, as you get significantly more engagement when a group has agreed to actively mobilise its members rather than passively post about it.

Group chat callouts

Send a message out with why you are doing it, the link to the guidance document, the link to the spreadsheet, and an encouragement for participants to sign up to time-slots if possible.

Here is a template call-out message. If you have the graphic prepared in time, share this on group chats with the call-out message as the caption as it is more eye-catching:

 **ALLIANZ PHONE BLOCKADE** 
MONDAY 17TH FEB 9AM-5PM

How do I join in?

1. Read the instructions
2. Use the form to sign up to time slots linked in the instructions form. Check the Timeslots spreadsheet for which slots we are low on people for (or participate at some point in the day)
3. Spread the word!

https://linktr.ee/booking_blockade

What is a phone blockade?

The idea is for you to phone Allianz repeatedly during your time slot (or whenever works for you), and if you get through, reading a little script we provide. It can be done from home or on your lunch break!

What do we hope to accomplish?

This action is about demonstrating the overwhelming public support for Palestine and divestment from the Zionist regime, which jams up their phone lines so that customers can't get through in the process!

Why Allianz?

Allianz invests nearly \$1 million dollars into Elbit Systems- Israel's largest weapons manufacturers, enabling the murder and genocide of the Palestinians to continue. In addition to Allianz's \$891,000 dollar investment into Elbit, Allianz also provides Employers Liability Insurance to Elbit Systems UK through it's subsidiary 'Allianz Insurance Products Trust'. Elbit systems provide 85% of Israel's military drone fleet and land-based equipment, as well as missiles, bombs and other military technology. They provide those very same weapons that are used against Palestinians in Gaza and sold to oppressive regimes all over the world. Without Allianz's liability insurance Elbit would not be able to operate. We must make it clear that we will not allow business as usual for the blood-soaked corporations that provide financial backing for Israel's war crimes.

Please share far and wide!

The Graphic

This can look however you want, however we have found it more effective for the graphic to specifically be titled 'SIGN UP TO THE xxx PHONE BLOCKADE' rather than just 'xxx PHONE BLOCKADE'. Other things that should be included in the graphic:

1. Date
2. Time (e.g. 9am-5pm)
3. Click the link in our bio for the instructions and to sign up to a 15 MINUTE TIME SLOT (emphasis how short the sign ups are)
4. Slogan e.g. 'no business as usual for genocide profiteers'

We have also found it effective to make it a carousel post on instagram, with further slides giving the info in the call out message/ caption.

Social media

Process is as follows:

1. Post the graphic with the call out message as the caption (change the url link to 'link in our bio'). Add any other groups that you're working with/ are up for linking up to promote as collaborators.
2. Create a story from the post and add a sticker link to the linktree. Share the story then go back onto the story and go to 'add mentions. You can add up to 20 mentions. A 'mention' means that the tagged account can just click 'Add to your story' to copy the story over to theirs instead of having to create one from scratch. This means big accounts are a lot more likely to be willing to do it as it is much lower effort. If you tag accounts that you haven't done this with before, send them a follow up message to say that you are running this phone blockade and you are trying to get mass mobilisation as it is a very accessible action, please could they share the story on their account. This tends to get much better luck than just randomly tagging them.
3. If you can think of more than 20 accounts to tag, create another story (maybe wait a day if possible) and tag a new 20 accounts. Phone blockades can be participated in by anyone in the country, however people tend to be more likely to sign up when targeting branches nearer to them.

On the day

One person should keep an eye on the spreadsheet all day to copy the feedback over from the airtable form (and new sign ups) to the google spreadsheet., and direct participants to the next priority phone numbers/ provide new phone numbers if the line(s) have been disconnected.

It is also worth pushing your call outs again as you can get a fair few on the day sign ups.

Successfully organised a phone blockade?

Tell YFFP about it! We would love to help share your blockade on social media in advance and celebrate your achievement afterwards! We also would be very interested to hear any feedback about how it went so we can improve this guidance material if needed.