Palestine Solidarity Campaign on Palestinian Action

Palestine Action

Kamel Hawwash and Ben Jamal outlined concerns about the activities of the group Palestine Action, following discussion at PSC's Executive Committee. A number of key partners, including the leadership of the Boycott National Committee (BNC) in Palestine, have discussed with PSC concerns about the activities of this group, and the risks to the wider movement. BNC have communicated these concerns directly to Palestine Action, and asked them to remove all references to BDS from their website, a request eventually complied with by Palestine Action.

PSC has sought legal advice about the potential liabilities arising from the commission of acts of criminal damage of high monetary levels (more than £5000) and how these may also apply to those offering support to these activities even if not undertaking the activities themselves. This advice included noting that Section 1 of the Criminal Damage Act 1971 states that it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage property that belongs to another person. A person convicted of criminal damage can be sentenced to a maximum of 3 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2500 if the value of the damage caused is under £5000. If the value of the damage caused exceeds £5000 a person can be sentenced to a maximum of 10 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

These liabilities potentially extend to both individuals encouraging or assisting criminal acts (including, for example, providing financial support), and organisations, including PSC branches that offered encouragement or assistance.

These concerns are not raised because PSC, or the BDS Movement is opposed to any form of direct action. Instead, they are raised because of the strategic and legal risks associated with the type of action being conducted by the group. PSC sought the advice to ensure it was discharging its duty of care to members to ensure they were aware of possible legal consequences of their association or support for Palestine Action's activities.