

WHAT IS BDS?



Jerusalem
Institute of Justice

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WHAT IS BDS?

| BDS is an abbreviation of the words **Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions**, which together constitute a call for various forms of boycott campaigns against the State of Israel.

| The BDS campaign, which began in early 2005, was organized by dozens of Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Together, these form a network of NGOs with an “HQ” in Ramallah (in the West Bank), while maintaining close ties with NGOs from all around the world (e.g. the USA, South America, western and central Europe, Australia, South Africa, the Arab countries, and more). These organizations promote boycotts, divestments, and sanctions of the State of Israel in various arenas.



| In the last few years, a new type of boycott arose: while in the past, these were mainly initiated by countries (the Arab League boycott, for example), today - the driving forces are **civilian, non-governmental organizations** who present themselves as human rights organizations.

| The boycott NGOs are disguised as human rights activists; they officially register as non-profit organizations, enjoy the standing of an NGO, and are perceived in many places, especially Europe, as legitimate human rights organizations. In fact, many of these NGOs conceal their activities and “whitewash” their agendas, when their true sole purpose is to boycott the State of Israel and even undermine its existence as a Jewish nation-state.

| Among the founding principles of the boycott movement is the call to allow the return of Palestinian refugees and their descendants to the State of Israel; this would result in dismantling the State of Israel as a Jewish nation state.

| Contrary to the public proclamations of the BDS movement leaders, the campaign is not intended to politically pressure the State of Israel to withdraw from the Judea and Samaria regions alone (AKA the West Bank, or “occupied territories”), but rather aims at a one-state solution with borders stretching from Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.

| The BDS network runs a multidimensional campaign against the State of Israel, its most prominent arenas being the academic, economic, cultural, and institutional (both state and municipal) realms.

| The delegitimization and boycott campaign acts to create an anti-Israeli climate around the world and is rife with antisemitism.

| The boycott campaign leaders object to any initiative promoting the coexistence of Israeli and Palestinian artists, claiming it harms the attempt to isolate and boycott the State of Israel.

The umbrella coalition of Palestinian boycott NGOs includes:

| **BNC** - The BDS movement's HQ in Ramallah. The BDS National Committee, which was founded in 2007, serves as the National Palestinian Committee for the promotion of the global BDS campaign. The BNC leads and organizes most of the movement's operations.

| **PACBI** - The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. The organization serves as the BNC branch in the academic and cultural arenas, tirelessly acting to prevent artists from performing in the State of Israel.

The BDS campaign leaders have maintained ties with terrorist operatives in the past and continue to do so to this day. Several countries, including the USA, Germany, Austria, France, and Britain perceive the BDS as an antisemitic campaign, and therefore act to prevent its activities. For the same reason, online funding platforms and banks have even frozen BDS NGO accounts.

BDS ARENAS OF OPERATION AND METHODOLOGIES

Methodology: Social Media, Public Harassment (“Shaming”), and Individualized Terror.

Social Media | BDS organizations act efficiently across the different social media platforms while increasingly employing Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram applications. Methodologies include: Creating and widely using a designated hashtag for specific campaigns, publicly calling out artists and public figures to not visit the State of Israel, spreading online petitions, and threatening artists (in some instances even threatening their lives).

Applying pressure with the help of BDS “ambassadors” such as Roger Waters, Bryan Eno, and others: As of 2018, the pressure applied by BDS activists on VIPs and supporters of the State of Israel has become even more extreme; severe individualized pressure is put on artists and their family members, until they are forced to give in despite personal wishes.

Example 1 | Friendly football match between the Argentinian and Israeli national teams, June 2019.

A widespread campaign against the Argentinian National Football Team visiting the State of Israel for a friendly match. Key figures in the Palestinian Authority threatened the lives of Argentinian team players (i.e. Lionel Messi) and their families. The match was therefore postponed to an unknown date.

Example 2 | South African model-actress Shashi Naidoo, July 2018. Naidoo expressed support of the State of Israel on her Twitter account. Following a wave of threats and constant harassment, she was forced to hold a press conference and retract her statement, whilst also being forced to attend a “re-education tour” arranged by the Palestinian NGOs.



Example 3 | Campaign to cancel singer Lana Del Rey’s performance at the Meteor Festival September 2018.

This campaign included direct addresses to Lana Del Rey across the internet, including on Instagram and Facebook, both by boycott organizations and by Roger Waters, as they “warned” her about performing in an apartheid state, and even created a designated hashtag for this purpose: #LanaDontGo.

PUBLIC PROCLAMATIONS OF PARLIAMENTS AND PUBLIC FIGURES AGAINST THE BDS MOVEMENT

“The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement is wrong, it is unacceptable.”

British Prime Minister Theresa May, December 2016

“Who today under the flag of the BDS movement calls to boycott Israeli goods and services speaks the same language (used by the Nazis) in which people were called to not buy from Jews.” **German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s Christian Democratic Union Party official statement, December 2016**

“I cannot think of anything more foolish (than to boycott) a country that when all is said and done is the only democracy in their region, the only place that has in my view a pluralist open society.” **Former British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Boris Johnson, November 2015**

“Antisemitism is far too present. Jewish students still feel unwelcomed and uncomfortable on some of our colleges and university campuses because of BDS-related intimidation. And out of our entire community of nations, it is Israel whose right to exist is most widely and wrongly questioned.” **Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau, November 2018**

“Well done #Israel #Eurovision Worthy winners!” **J.K. Rowling expressing support of Israel on her Twitter account.**

“I’ll take a skateboard and make myself important at the behind-the-scene, like it or not (laughs).” **Conchita Wurst, Austrian Eurovision Contest Winner (2014), on attending the Eurovision in Tel Aviv, official invitation sent out or not.**

“I think the cultural boycott of Israel is cowardly and shameful...the boycott of Israel can be seen to be antisemitic at heart.” **Nick Cave**

“Music, art, and academia is about crossing borders not building them, about open minds not closed ones, about shared humanity, dialogue, and freedom of expression.” **Thom York of Radiohead on performing in Israel**

WE BELIEVE THAT:

- 1 | Culture and music serve as a bridge between people and have the power to spread a message of peace, love, and reconciliation.
- 2 | Live performances in the State of Israel which are open to fans of all faiths - Jews, Muslims, Christians, and Druze - are a positive force that should be promoted.
- 3 | Culture should be above divisive politics - performing in the State of Israel is not a political act.
- 4 | The BDS combats any attempt to bring hope for peace between nations. The boycott campaign is aimed to distance, alienate, and divide people, thus preventing dialogue. **Build Bridges Not Boycotts.**
- 5 | We oppose the use of cultural boycott as a means to achieve political gain for one side over the other.
- 6 | Behind the call to boycott the State of Israel, and Israel alone, are those who act to single out the State of Israel and portray it as an illegitimate state, which deviates from constructive criticism.
- 7 | The State of Israel is a multicultural hub brimming with creative energy. Jewish artists sing in Arabic, whilst Arab artists sing in Hebrew - evidence of a chance for creative and artistic cultural fusion that flourishes thanks to our unique cultural diversity.
- 8 | We welcome all artists who choose to perform in the State of Israel for their dedicated fans - regardless of background, religion, or political opinion.

THE EUROVISION SONG CONTEST 2019: AN ISRAELI SUCCESS

The delegitimization and boycott campaign was attacking the State of Israel in the cultural arena. The Eurovision Song Contest is a large-scale cultural event with over 200 million viewers with a large public following. Among others, leading European countries perform in the contest, which took place in May 2019 in the State of Israel. Since the 2018 Israeli Eurovision win, the event had been under constant threat by the global BDS campaign.



The BDS organizations used various methods in an attempt to sabotage the different Eurovision events, significantly harm them, and at the very least, create a notable aura of delegitimization. This included:

- 1 |** Applying pressure on European broadcast authorities so that they would refrain from sending representatives to the contest.
- 2 |** Distributing online petitions calling to boycott the contest.
- 3 |** Addressing artists expected to participate in the contest and attempting to convince them not to, or at least convince them to speak publicly and negatively of the State of Israel. The BDS campaign also recruited artists who objected to holding the contest in the State of Israel.

There was an overall increase in the BDS campaign activities regarding holding the Eurovision Contest in the State of Israel. This was reflected in the Palestinian Authority campaigning against the contest, as well as a significant increase in the boycott campaign's scope of activity.

BDS failed.

Israel's Eurovision show was voted best of the decade! A European Broadcasting Union poll of viewers puts the 2019 Tel Aviv production ahead of all others in the 2010s.

Advocacy for Israel works.

Join JIJ efforts to safeguard Israel's legitimate standing among the nations today!



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