

Do Palestinians Support BDS?

The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel claims to broadly represent “Palestinian civil society”. It portrays itself as the true voice of the Palestinian people. While there certainly are Palestinians who support the movement, there are also many who do not.

“BDS spokespeople justify calling for boycotts that will result in increased economic hardships for the Palestinians by asserting that Palestinians are willing to suffer such deprivations in order to achieve their freedom. It goes without saying that they themselves live in comfortable circumstances elsewhere in the world and will not suffer any such hardship... this is the kind of ‘pro-Palestinian activism’ we could well do without.”¹

- Bassem Eid, Palestinian human rights activist

According to Norman Finkelstein, the organizations behind BDS “represent absolutely nothing”.

- “Who are these organizations? They’re NGOs in Ramallah, one person operations... If they really were Palestinian Civil Society as they claim, then why can they never organize a demonstration of more than 500 people? ...They’re just Ramallah NGOs which represent absolutely nothing... but they’re telling everyone else abroad what to do.” - Norman Finkelstein, *leading critic of Israel*, 2012²

The leadership of the Palestinian Authority opposes the boycott movement.

- “No we do not support the boycott of Israel. We don’t ask anyone to boycott Israel itself.” - Mahmoud Abbas, *President of the Palestinian Authority*, 2013³
- Majdi Khaldi, an adviser to Abbas said, “We are neighbors with Israel, we have agreements with Israel, we recognize Israel, we are not asking anyone to boycott products of Israel.”⁴

Many Palestinian workers oppose boycotts

- There are 14 Israeli industrial parks in West Bank, with 788 factories. Overall, these factories employ over 11,000 Palestinians, and pay two to three times what Palestinians make elsewhere on average.⁵
- In 2014, nearly 14% of the Palestinian workforce in West Bank was working in Israel or Israeli settlements.⁶
- Thousands of Palestinian farmers have worked with Israelis to learn and improve their agricultural techniques.⁷

Many Palestinian business leaders and entrepreneurs oppose boycotts

- Palestinian entrepreneurs have participated in countless joint projects with Israelis, and invested millions in joint Israeli-Palestinian venture capital.⁸ An estimated 16,000 Palestinian businesspeople have founded companies and factories in Israel and Israeli industrial zones in the West Bank, according to a 2012 study.⁹

Many Palestinian academics oppose boycotts

- “I’m against the boycott in general, we need more dialogue with the other. That’s why I believe that you should not have a general boycott against Israel, or a boycott against Israeli universities.”
- Mohammed S. Dajani Daoudi, *director of American studies at Al-Quds University*¹⁰
- Former President of Al Quds University Sari Nusseibeh has publicly opposed boycotts.¹¹ The University had about 60 joint projects with Israeli institutions, with a combined budget of \$5-million in 2009 alone.¹²

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- ¹ Bassem Eid, "The Palestinian Case Against BDS," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, June 25th, 2015, at <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-palestinian-case-against-bds>
- ² Norman Finkelstein, "Norman Finkelstein: BDS Movement is a 'Cult' part 2," *YouTube*, February 17, 2012, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONLacD6f1cg>
- ³ Yoel Goldman, "Abbas: Don't boycott Israel," *Times of Israel*, December 13, 2013, at <http://www.timesofisrael.com/abbas-we-do-not-support-the-boycott-of-israel/>
- ⁴ Simon, Jake Wallis . "Why even the Palestinian Authority opposes the boycott of Israel ?" EIPA. June 11, 2014. <http://eipa.eu.com/2014/06/why-even-the-palestinian-authority-opposes-the-boycott-of-israel/>
- ⁵ Kokko, Anna. "For ordinary Palestinians, full support of BDS is impossible." Al Bawaba. June 25, 2015. <http://www.albawaba.com/business/ordinary-palestinians-full-support-bds-impossible-712178>
- Simon, Jake Wallis . "Why even the Palestinian Authority opposes the boycott of Israel ?" EIPA. June 11, 2014. <http://eipa.eu.com/2014/06/why-even-the-palestinian-authority-opposes-the-boycott-of-israel/>
- ⁸ Richard Behar, "Peace Through Profits? Inside The Secret Tech Ventures That Are Reshaping the Israeli-Arab-Palestinian World," *Forbes*, August 12, 2013, at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/richardbehar/2013/07/24/peace-through-profits-a-private-sector-detente-is-drawing-israelis-palestinians-closer/>
- ⁹ Amira Hass, "Study: Palestinians invest twice as much in Israel as they do in West Bank," *Ha'aretz*, Nov. 22, 2011 at <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/study-palestinians-invest-twice-as-much-in-israel-as-they-do-in-west-bank-1.396979>
- ¹⁰ Matthew Kalman, "Palestinians Divided Over Boycott of Israeli Universities," *New York Times*, January 19, 2014, at http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/20/world/middleeast/palestinians-divided-over-boycott-of-israeli-universities.html?_r=0
- ¹¹ Matthew Kalman, "Palestinians Divided Over Boycott of Israeli Universities," *New York Times*, January 19, 2014, at http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/20/world/middleeast/palestinians-divided-over-boycott-of-israeli-universities.html?_r=0
- ¹² Matthew Kalman, "Palestinian University Suspends Contacts With Israeli Academics," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 3, 2009 at <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=921>