

## The US Campaign for Palestinian Rights: A Deceptive Name for a Coalition of Extremists

The US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR) is a coalition of over 300 organizations, who joined together shortly after the Second Intifada in 2001 to coordinate their efforts and develop a single national voice.<sup>1</sup> Formerly known as the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, USCPR seeks to achieve “no less than the transformation of U.S. public opinion” so that America ceases to support Israel.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, USCPR is “at the very heart” of the global Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement’s efforts to isolate Israel in the U.S..<sup>3</sup> In recent years, it has begun actively pressuring federal government officials to further this agenda – ramping up its presence in DC and employing multiple lobbyists. While USCPR claims to advocate for justice and human rights, it is in fact a coalition of extremists promoting a campaign of hate which harms Israelis and Palestinians alike.

### **USCPR’s members and partners have a disturbing history of promoting hate and supporting racist terrorist groups.**

- USCPR’s Steering Committee has included American Muslims for Palestine (AMP), whose leaders and speakers have engaged in racism, [homophobia](#), support for terrorism, and genocide denial.<sup>4</sup>
- USCPR member Al-Awda, traffics in racism and wild conspiracy theories and its leaders have celebrated the murder of innocent civilians. Al-Awda is also the fiscal sponsor of the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI) – another key USCPR group.<sup>5</sup>
- USACBI and USCPR officially boycott all, “academic activities and projects involving Palestinians and/or other Arabs on one side and Israelis on the other,” unless the Israelis involved agree in advance to support all of the BDS Movement’s political demands.<sup>6</sup> In effect, this means they oppose any effort to build peace and coexistence between Palestinians and the vast majority of Israelis.
- On September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017, USCPR member, the Monterey Peace & Justice Center, screened a speech by Christopher Bollyn – an anti-Semitic conspiracy theorist who claims Israel and Jews were responsible for 9/11. The stated purpose of their event was to “commemorate the victims of 9/11.”<sup>7</sup>
- In 2017 alone, USCPR Steering Committee member Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP):
  - Supported blatant anti-Semitism by organizers of the Chicago Dyke March, after they ejected a number of Jewish participants for holding a pride flag with the Star of David on it.<sup>8</sup>
  - Targeted a group of at-risk LGBTQ Jewish youth for, “sabotage bullying and harassment,” at the Celebrate Israel Parade in New York.<sup>9</sup>
  - Launched an anti-Semitic campaign falsely claiming that Israel and American Jewish organizations are responsible for increased police brutality against people of color in America.<sup>10</sup>
- USCPR member, the International Socialist Organization, published a call for “unconditional” support of the terrorist organization Hamas.<sup>11</sup>
- USCPR itself, along with major member groups like JVP, AMP, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and others ran a campaign glorifying convicted terrorist Ramea Odeh. Odeh helped orchestrate the murder of two civilians, Edward Joffe and Leon Kanner, in 1969. USCPR and its allies have denied her guilt and tried to turn her into a social justice icon, even though Odeh’s own relative is on film confirming her involvement in the murder.<sup>12</sup>

**In effect, USCPR is the American wing of BDS – a global movement that seeks to eliminate Israel.**

- USCPR is the fiscal sponsor of the Palestinian Boycott National Committee (BNC), which coordinates BDS globally.<sup>13</sup> Mahmoud Nawajaa, the General Coordinator of the BNC, has publicly supported Hamas' armed wing – the Al Qassam Brigades – on social media.<sup>14</sup>
- One of the leading groups in the BNC is the Council of National and Islamic Forces - a coalition of Palestinian groups which includes the terrorist organizations Hamas and Islamic Jihad.<sup>15</sup> The coordinator of the National and Islamic Forces is Khaled al-Batsh, a senior Islamic Jihad official.<sup>16</sup>
- Omar Barghouti has said, “we oppose a Jewish state” and many other leading BDS activists have made similar statements.<sup>17</sup> Norman Finkelstein, an infamous critic of Israel, has said that BDS is “not really talking about rights. They’re talking about [how] they want to destroy Israel.”<sup>18</sup>
- One of BDS and USCPR’s main political demands is, a “right of return” to Israel for millions of Palestinian refugees. According to President Barack Obama, this would, “extinguish Israel as a Jewish state, and that’s not an option.” Similarly, Omar Barghouti has said that, “a return for refugees would end Israel’s existence as a Jewish state”.<sup>19</sup>
- Noam Chomsky, one of Israel’s harshest critics, has accused BDS of calling for “the destruction of Israel,” and said that “if you really hate the Palestinians, [BDS] is a good step because it’s going to harm them.”<sup>20</sup>
- Palestinian activist Walid Issa has said, “[w]hat I do not find acceptable... is indiscriminately boycotting, divesting from and sanctioning all Israelis... We help no one when we blindly inflict pain on Israelis no matter what the collateral damage is to Palestinians.”<sup>21</sup>

**In recent years, UCSPR has increased its efforts to pressure Congress and other government bodies.**

- USCPR, as well as its members like AMP, JVP, and the American Friends Service Committee, employ numerous DC lobbyists. They run a variety of campaigns to push their anti-peace agenda in Congress.<sup>22</sup>
- USCPR falsely claims legislative efforts against BDS constitute an assault on free speech, portraying itself as a defender of the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, its member groups have repeatedly violated the right of Israelis to speak on campus, and USCPR has supported campaigns to cut off the free exchange of ideas between Israeli academics and the rest of the world.<sup>24</sup>
- USCPR mobilized its members pressure the Democratic party to adopt anti-Israel positions at the 2016 Democratic National Convention (DNC). Anti-Israel extremists burned Israeli flags outside the event.<sup>25</sup>
- USCPR is actively seeking to introduce BDS initiatives in local governments and city councils across the United States, following campaigns in Portland, Oregon and Berkeley, California.<sup>26</sup>

**It’s up to you and other people of conscience to ensure that USCPR’s campaign of hate fails. If they come to your community, educate your leaders and elected officials about what they really stand for.**

**Don’t allow USCPR to fuel more hatred and conflict. Support justice and peace for Israelis and Palestinians.**



- <sup>1</sup> <https://uscpr.org/about-us/> and <http://endtheoccupation.org/article.php?id=1193>
- <sup>2</sup> Phyllis Bennis, "A Memo on Palestine & the US, On Palestinians & Americans," August 15, 2001 at <http://web.archive.org/web/20160531084400/http://www.endtheoccupation.org/article.php?id=24>.
- <sup>3</sup> US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, "Testimonials," at <https://uscpr.org/about-us/testimonials/>
- <sup>4</sup> Max Samarov and Philippe Assouline, "Who's Really Driving 'Grassroots' Anti-Israel Activism in America?"
- <sup>5</sup> Max Samarov and Shahar Azani, "Who's Really Behind the Academic Boycott Against Israel?" *Huffington Post*, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/whos-really-behind-the-academic-boycott-against-israel\\_us\\_586fd065e4b0a5e600a78a3a](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/whos-really-behind-the-academic-boycott-against-israel_us_586fd065e4b0a5e600a78a3a); US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, "Academic & Cultural Boycott," at <https://uscpr.org/campaigns/acbj/>
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid
- <sup>7</sup> The Monterey Peace & Justice Center, "The Truth Behind 9/11 and the War on Terror," *Facebook*, September 12, 2017, at <https://www.facebook.com/events/780498142122501>; Marilyn Mayo, "Anti-Semitic Conspiracy Theorist Christopher Bollyn Speaks In Brooklyn," *Anti-Defamation League*, September 7, 2016, at <https://www.adl.org/blog/anti-semitic-conspiracy-theorist-christopher-bollyn-speaks-in-brooklyn>
- <sup>8</sup> Jewish Voice for Peace, "Chicago Jewish Voice for Peace Statement of Solidarity with Chicago Dyke March Collective," at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VG2cPkUfCFVsv4DmvRbOSQnzMdUt7so8AlrQHcXSyA/pub>; Gretchen Rachel Hammond, "More than 1,500 at Dyke March in Little Village, Jewish Pride flags banned (UPDATED June 25)," *Windy City Times*, June 24, 2017, at <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/More-than-1500-at-Dyke-March-in-Little-Village-Jewish-Pride-flags-banned-UPDATED-June-25-/59621.html>
- <sup>9</sup> JQY, "'Jewish Voice for Peace' infiltrators sabotage at-risk LGBTQ Jewish youth at the Celebrate Israel Parade," at <http://www.igvyouth.org/parade-statement/>
- <sup>10</sup> Judy Maltz, "ADL Slams pro-BDS Jewish Group's 'anti-Semitic' New Video Campaign," *Haaretz*, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017, at <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/premium-1.802557>
- <sup>11</sup> US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, "Member Groups in Good Standing," 2014, at <http://endtheoccupation.org/article.php?id=3988>; Critical Reading, "What do socialists say about Hamas?" July 31, 2014, at *Socialist Worker*, <http://socialistworker.org/blog/critical-reading/2014/07/31/what-do-socialists-say-about-h>
- <sup>12</sup> Ramah Kudaimi, "Rasmea Odeh Will Continue Her Struggle," *US Campaign for Palestinian Rights*, at <https://uscpr.org/rasmea-odeh-will-continue-struggle/>; Palestinian Media Watch, "Terrorist Aisha Odeh states she and Rasmieh Odeh killed 2 Israelis in a 1969 bombing," *YouTube*, December 18, 2016, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSFOBUPXaOI>
- <sup>13</sup> Armin Rosen and Liel Leibovitz, "BDS Umbrella Group Linked to Palestinian Terrorist Organizations," *Tablet Magazine*, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, at <http://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/263409/bds-umbrella-group-linked-to-palestinian-terrorist-organizations>
- <sup>14</sup> European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine, "International Conference of Local Governments and Civil Society Organizations in Support of Palestinian Rights," December 2, 2014, at <http://www.eccpalestine.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Provprog-SEVILLE-with-names-1DEC2014.pdf>; Mahmoud Nawajaa, Facebook Post, July 14, 2014, at <https://www.facebook.com/mahmoud.nawajaa/posts/10152621485783185> (Above the post Nawajaa wrote "the Qassam style! Glory to resistance and eternity to martyrs.")
- <sup>15</sup> BDS Movement, "Palestinian BDS National Committee," n.d., at <http://www.bdsmovement.net/bnc>; International Solidarity Movement, "Statement by the Palestinian National and Islamic Forces in Hebron on the CPT Hostages in Iraq Statement by the Palestinian National and Islamic Forces in Hebron on the CPT Hostages in Iraq," December 6, 2005, at <http://palsolidarity.org/2005/12/statement-by-the-palestinian-national-and-islamic-forces-in-hebron-on-the-cpt-hostages-in-iraq/>
- <sup>16</sup> Maan News, "National and Islamic Forces meet Deputy Secretary-General's delegation," May 25, 2014, at <http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=699735>; Mouin Rabbani, "Between Hamas and the PA: An Interview with Islamic Jihad's Khalid al-Batsh," *Jadaliyya*, May 28, 2013, at <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/11916/between-hamas-and-the-pa-an-interview-with-islamic>
- <sup>17</sup> John Y. Jones, "Omar Barghouti – Strategies for Change," *Vimeo*, September 2013, at <https://vimeo.com/75201955>; Ahmed Moor, "BDS is a long term project with radically transformative potential," *Mondoweiss*, April 22, 2010, at <http://mondoweiss.net/2010/04/bds-is-a-long-term-project-with-radically-transformative-potential.html>; Informed Grads, "UAW 2865 BDS Caucus Panel Discussion," Nov. 12, 2014, at [http://informedgrads.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/bds\\_event\\_transcript.txt](http://informedgrads.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/bds_event_transcript.txt); As'ad AbuKhalil, "A Critique of Norman Finkelstein on BDS," February 17, 2012, at <http://english.al-akhbar.com/blogs/angry-corner/critique-norman-finkelstein-bds>
- <sup>18</sup> Norman Finkelstein, "Norman Finkelstein on BDS," *YouTube*, February 15, 2012, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iggdO7C70P8>
- <sup>19</sup> BDS Movement, "Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS," July 9, 2005, at <http://www.bdsmovement.net/call>; Barack Obama, "Obama: Opposes 'Right of Return Inside Israel,'" *YouTube*, May 2, 2008, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xatt3DmTXHo>; Ali Mustafa, "'Boycotts work': An interview with Omar Barghouti," *Electronic Intifada*, May 31, 2009, at <http://electronicintifada.net/content/boycotts-work-interview-omar-barghouti/8263>
- <sup>20</sup> Noam Chomsky, "Noam Chomsky Interviewed by Frank Barat, on Israel/Palestine (4/4)," *YouTube*, September 22, 2010, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5Hy-gffVOM>
- <sup>21</sup> Walid Issa, "BDS movement: My Palestinian pride is not measured by your hatred of Israel," *Star Tribune*, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at <http://www.startribune.com/bds-movement-my-palestinian-pride-is-not-measured-by-your-hatred-of-israel/413774143/>
- <sup>22</sup> US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, "Staff" at <https://uscpr.org/about-us/staff/>; US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, "Government Affairs," at <https://uscpr.org/campaign/government-affairs/>; Jewish Voice for Peace, "Legislative Advocacy," at <https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/legislative-advocacy/>; American Muslims for Palestine, "Staff and National Board," at <https://www.ampalestine.org/about-amp/staff>; American Friends Service Committee, "National Office of Public Policy and Advocacy (OPPA)," at <https://www.afsc.org/national-office-public-policy-and-advocacy-oppa>
- <sup>23</sup> US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, "Oppose the Israel Anti-Boycott Act," at <https://uscpr.org/campaigns/oppose-israel-anti-boycott-act/>; Jonathan Greenblatt and Stuart Eizenstat, "It's time to update America's important anti-boycott law for Israel," *Washington Post*, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/its-time-to-update-americas-important-anti-boycott-law-for-israel/2017/09/12/4a196a70-9728-11e7-b569-3360011663b4\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.325367ae4215](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/its-time-to-update-americas-important-anti-boycott-law-for-israel/2017/09/12/4a196a70-9728-11e7-b569-3360011663b4_story.html?utm_term=.325367ae4215); U.S. Senator Ben Cardin, "Setting the Record Straight: Nothing in the Israel Anti-Boycott Act restricts constitutionally-protected free speech," *Medium*, July 20, 2017, at <https://medium.com/@SenatorBenCardin/setting-the-record-straight-nothing-in-the-israel-anti-boycott-act-restricts-constitutionally-13bfa7428d8>; Eugene Kontorovich, "Israel anti-boycott bill does not violate free speech," *Washington Post*, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2017/07/27/israel-anti-boycott-bill-does-not-violate-free-speech/?utm\\_term=.fcb09c9b7593](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2017/07/27/israel-anti-boycott-bill-does-not-violate-free-speech/?utm_term=.fcb09c9b7593); David Schraub, "The US anti-BDS bill may be bad, but not as bad as some critics say," *JTA*, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at <https://www.jta.org/2017/07/24/news-opinion/opinion/the-us-anti-bds-bill-may-be-bad-but-not-as-bad-as-some-critics-say>
- <sup>24</sup> Cary Nelson and David Greenberg, "Students are shouting down pro-Israel speakers – and silencing free speech," *Washington Post*, December 7, 2016, at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/students-are-shouting-down-pro-israel-speakers-and-silencing-free-speech/2016/12/07/9211c3b8-bbd7-11e6-91ee-1addf636cbe\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.7121543ea657](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/students-are-shouting-down-pro-israel-speakers-and-silencing-free-speech/2016/12/07/9211c3b8-bbd7-11e6-91ee-1addf636cbe_story.html?utm_term=.7121543ea657); US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, "Academic & Cultural Boycott," at <https://uscpr.org/campaigns/acbj/>
- <sup>25</sup> US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, "Take Our Message to the DNC, RNC," at <https://uscpr.org/campaigns/take-our-message-to-the-dnc-rnc/>; JTA, "Protesters burn Israeli flag outside Democratic convention," July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016, at <https://www.jta.org/2016/07/27/news-opinion/politics/protesters-burn-israeli-flag-outside-democratic-convention>
- <sup>26</sup> US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, "Municipal Campaigns," at <https://uscpr.org/campaigns/municipalcampaigns/>