

STATE OF PALESTINE
PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
NABLUS – RAMALLAH

October 3th, 2014

Over 400 anthropologists join the call for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions

More than 400 anthropologists have signed a statement endorsing the burgeoning movement to boycott Israeli academic institutions in protest of Israel's systematic human rights violations against the Palestinian people. These violations, in which many Israeli educational institutions are complicit, include denying Palestinians their right to education and academic freedom.

We, the undersigned anthropologists, are circulating this petition to voice our opposition to the ongoing Israeli violations of Palestinian rights, including the Israeli military occupation of the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and East Jerusalem, and to boycott Israeli academic institutions that are complicit in these violations.

The recent military assault on the Gaza Strip by Israel is only the latest reminder that the world's governments and mainstream media do not hold Israel accountable for its violations of international law. As a community of scholars who study problems of power, oppression, and cultural hegemony, we have a moral responsibility to speak out and demand accountability from Israel and our own governments. Acting in solidarity with Palestinian civil society continues a disciplinary tradition of support for anticolonial and human rights struggles, itself an important departure from anthropology's historical complicity with colonialism. As laid out in the American Anthropological Association (AAA)'s 1999 Declaration on Anthropology and Human Rights, "Anthropology as a profession is committed to the promotion and protection of the right of people and peoples everywhere to the full realization of their humanity...When any culture or society denies or permits the denial of such opportunity to any of its own members or others, the AAA has an ethical responsibility to protest and oppose such deprivation."

Israel has maintained an illegal siege on the Gaza Strip for seven years, severely restricting the movement of people and goods in and out of the territory. Palestinians are also being dispossessed of their lands and livelihoods throughout the West Bank, where Israel's separation barrier curtails Palestinian freedom of movement and education. These and other ongoing violations will continue unless people around the world act where their governments have failed.

As employees in institutions of higher learning, we have a particular responsibility to oppose Israel's widespread and systematic violations of the right to higher education of Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line. In recent months, Israeli forces have raided Al Quds University in Jerusalem, the Arab American University in Jenin, and Birzeit University near Ramallah. In this summer's assault, Israeli aerial bombardment destroyed much of the Islamic University of Gaza. More generally, the Israeli state discriminates against Palestinian students in Israeli universities and it isolates Palestinian academia by, among other tactics, preventing foreign academics from visiting Palestinian institutions in Gaza and the West Bank. We are also alarmed by the long history of confiscations of Palestinian archives and the destruction of libraries and research centers.

Israeli academic institutions are complicit with the occupation and oppression of Palestinians. Tel Aviv University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Bar Ilan University, Haifa University, Technion, and Ben Gurion University have publicly declared their unconditional support for the Israeli military.

Furthermore, there are intimate connections between Israeli academic institutions and the military, security, and political establishments in Israel. To take but one example: Tel Aviv University is directly implicated, through its Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), in developing the Dahiya Doctrine, adopted by the Israeli military in its assaults on Lebanon in 2006 and on Gaza this summer. The Dahiya Doctrine advocates the extensive destruction of civilian infrastructure and "intense suffering" among the civilian population as an "effective" means to subdue any resistance.

As anthropologists, we feel compelled to join academics around the world who support the Palestinian call to boycott Israeli academic institutions. This call is part of a long-standing appeal by Palestinian civil society organizations for the comprehensive implementation of boycotts, divestments, and sanctions (BDS) of Israel, and is supported by the Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees (PFUPE).

In responding to the Palestinian call, we seek to practice what the AAA calls an “engaged anthropology” that is “committed to supporting social change efforts that arise from the interaction between community goals and anthropological research.” Anthropological research has illuminated the destructive effects of the Israeli occupation on Palestinian society. And the Palestinian community has called for an academic boycott of Israel as a necessary step to ensuring Palestinian rights, including the right to education.

In accordance with these stated principles in support of rights and justice, anthropologists both independently and through the AAA have taken strong stances on a number of issues: apartheid in South Africa, Namibia, and Burundi; violence against civilians in the former Yugoslavia and Pakistan; violence against indigenous and minority populations in Chile, Brazil, and Bulgaria; the use of torture; the Pinochet coup in Chile; and the misuse of anthropological knowledge in the U.S. Army’s Human Terrain System. As an organization, the AAA has also participated in boycotts on several occasions: of the Fulbright-Chile program in 1975; of the State of Illinois in 1999; of the Hilton hotel chain in 2004; of Coca-Cola in 2006; and of the State of Arizona in 2010.

Boycotting Israeli academic institutions is very much in concert with these previous actions. Our decision now to sign on as individuals to the academic boycott represents a concrete and consequential assertion of our commitment as anthropologists to the struggle of the Palestinian people.

Following in the footsteps of the growing number of US academic associations that have endorsed boycott resolutions, we call on our anthropologist colleagues to boycott Israeli academic institutions. Given that decades of interaction, cooperation and collaboration with Israeli institutions have not produced mutual understanding or stopped the military occupation and its violations, we believe that this boycott is the only non-violent form of pressure that could persuade Israelis to call for – and act for – meaningful change that could lead to a just peace. Palestinians must be free to attend universities, in Palestine and internationally, in security. They must have a flourishing, inclusive, well-rounded educational experience. They must be free to meet and learn from scholars from all over the world.

We pledge not to collaborate on projects and events involving Israeli academic institutions, not to teach at or to attend conferences and other events at such institutions, and not to publish in academic journals based in Israel. We call for doing so until such time as these institutions end their complicity in violating Palestinian rights as stipulated in international law, and respect the full rights of Palestinians by calling on Israel to: End its siege of Gaza, its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands occupied in June 1967, and dismantle the settlements and the walls; Recognize the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel and the stateless Negev Bedouins to full equality; and Respect, protect, and promote the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194.

Sincerely,

Nahla Abdo, Carleton University
Nadia Abu El-Haj, Columbia University
Lila Abu-Lughod, Columbia University
Fida Adely, Georgetown University
Asad Ahmed, Harvard University
Ananthkrishnan Aiyer, University of Michigan-Flint
Nadje Al-Ali, School of Oriental & African Studies
Diana Allan, Cornell University
Lori Allen, School of Oriental & African Studies
Mark Anderson, UC Santa Cruz
Walter Armbrust, Oxford University
Talal Asad, CUNY Graduate Center

Barbara Aswad, Wayne State University
Mariam Banahi, Johns Hopkins University
Lesley Bartlett, University of Wisconsin
Debbora Battaglia, Mt. Holyoke College
Joshua Bell
Hugo Benavides, Fordham University
Victoria Bernal, UC Irvine
Tom Boellstorff, UC Irvine
John Borneman, Princeton University
Philippe Bourgois, University of Pennsylvania
Glenn Bowman, University of Kent
Karen Brodtkin, UCLA
Kevin Caffrey, Harvard University
Steven Caton, Harvard University
Jessica Cattelino, UCLA
Sharad Chari, University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa)
Dawn Chatty, Oxford University
Nancy N. Chen, UC Santa Cruz
David Chicoine, Louisiana State University
Julie Chu, University of Chicago
Francis Cody, University of Toronto
Karen Coelho, Madras Institute of Development Studies
Jean Comaroff, Harvard University
John Comaroff, Harvard University
Nicholas Copeland, Virginia Tech
Jane Cowan, Sussex University
Rochelle Davis, Georgetown University
Anouk de Koning, Radboud University Nijmegen
Marisol de la Cadena, UC Davis
Erin Debenport, University of New Mexico
Lara Deeb, Scripps College
Michael Dietler, University of Chicago
Chris Dole, Amherst College
Donald L. Donham, UC Davis
Narges Erami, Yale University
Arturo Escobar, UNC Chapel Hill
Elizabeth Faier, Wayne State University
Randa Farah, University of Western Ontario
James C. Faris, University of Connecticut
Tessa Farmer, Whittier College
Ilana Feldman, George Washington University
Mayanthi Fernando, UC Santa Cruz
Les Field, University of New Mexico
Rowan Flad, Harvard University
Andrew Gardner, University of Puget Sound
Hildred Geertz, Princeton
Farha Ghannam, Swarthmore
Lesley Gill, Vanderbilt University
Gaston Gordillo, University of British Columbia
Sarah R. Graff, Arizona State University
Linda Green, University of Arizona
Steven Gregory, Columbia University
Nina Gren, Lund University

Zareena Grewal, Yale University
Akhil Gupta, UCLA
Sherine Hafez, UC Riverside
Ghassan Hage, University of Melbourne
Sondra Hale, UCLA
Sherine Hamdy, Brown University
Rema Hammami, Bir Zeit University
Abdellah Hammoudi, Princeton University
Clara Han, Johns Hopkins University
Richard Handler, University of Virginia
Jamil Hanifi, Michigan State University
Deborah Heath, Lewis and Clark
Mary Hegland, Santa Clara University
Stefan Helmreich, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Sarah Hill, Western Michigan University
Charles Hirschkind, UC Berkeley
Engseng Ho, Duke University
Katherine Hoffman, Northwestern University
Matthew Hull, University of Michigan
Farhana Ibrahim, IIT Delhi
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Ann M. Kakaliouras, Whittier College
Vinay Kamat, University of British Columbia
Rhoda Kanaaneh, Columbia University
Sohini Kar, London School of Economics
Kēhaulani Kauanui, Wesleyan University
Tobias Kelly, Edinburgh University
Lamya Khalidi, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (France)
Naveeda Khan, Johns Hopkins University
Eleana Kim, UC Irvine
Laurie King, Georgetown University
Philip L. Kohl, Wellesley College
Dorinne Kondo, University of Southern California
Nikolas Kosmatopoulos, École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne
Corinne Kratz, Emory University
Petra Kuppinger, Monmouth College
Chris Kuzawa, Northwestern University
Roger Lancaster, George Mason University
Barbara Larson, University of New Hampshire
Richard Borshay Lee, University of Toronto
Winnie Lem, Trent University
Robert Leopold
Krista Lewis, University of Arkansas
Tania Li, University of Toronto
Anders Linde-Laursen, Eastern Michigan University
Ralph Litzinger, Duke University
Margaret Lock, McGill University
Jeffrey C. Long, University of New Mexico
Catherine Lutz, Brown University

Sarah Lyon, University of Kentucky
Peter Magee, Bryn Mawr
Pardis Mahdavi, Pomona College
Saba Mahmood, UC Berkeley
Lilith Mahmud, UC Irvine
Sunaina Maira, UC Davis
Martin F. Manalansan IV, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Paul Manning, Trent University
Setrag Manoukian, McGill University
Joe Masco, University of Chicago
Kathryn Mathers, Northwestern University
Lorand Matory, Duke University
William Mazarella, University of Chicago
Carlota McAllister, York University
David McMurray, Oregon State University
Anne Meneley, Trent University
Kalyani Menon, DePaul University
Sofian Merabet, UT Austin
Brinkley Messick, Columbia University
Laurence Michalak, UC Berkeley
Flagg Miller, UC Davis
Ziba Mir-Hosseini, School of Oriental & African Studies
Amira Mittermaier, University of Toronto
Lamia Moghnieh, University of Michigan
Annelies Moors, University of Amsterdam
Viranjini Munasinghe, Cornell University
Martha Mundy, London School of Economics
Donna Murdock, University of the South
Nadine Naber, University of Illinois at Chicago
Diane M. Nelson, Duke University
Jan Nesor, Ohio State University
Fari Nzinga, New Orleans Museum of Art
Michelle Obeid, Manchester University
Marcia Ochoa, UC Santa Cruz
Aihwa Ong, UC Berkeley
Sherry Ortner, UCLA
Arzoo Osanloo, University of Washington
Esra Özyürek, London School of Economics
Mark Padilla, Florida International University
Stefania Pandolfo, UC Berkeley
Ayşe Parla, Sabancı University
Heather Paxson, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Michael G. Peletz, Emory University
Michael Perez, University of Washington
Julie Peteet, University of Louisville
Mark Peterson, Miami University, Ohio
Deborah Poole, Johns Hopkins University
Elliot Prasse-Freeman, Yale University
David H. Price, Saint Martin's University
Nicolas Puig, Institut de recherche pour le développement
James Quesada, San Francisco State University
Lucinda Ramberg, Cornell University
Junaid Rana, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Vyjayanthi V. Rao, New School for Social Research
Anupama Rao, Columbia University
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Lisa Rofel, UC Santa Cruz
Kaifa Roland, University of Colorado
Danilyn Rutherford, UC Santa Cruz
Moain Sadeq, Qatar University
Christa Salamandra, Lehman College CUNY
Ruba Saleh, School of Oriental & African Studies
Elaine Salo, University of Delaware
Aseel Sawalha, Fordham University
Rosemary Sayigh
Kirsten Scheid, American University of Beirut
Samuli Schielke, Zentrum Moderner Orient (Berlin)
Daniel Segal, Pitzer College
Noa Shaindlinger, University of Toronto
Sima Shakhsari, Wellesley College
Seteney Shami, Arab Council for the Social Sciences
Shalini Shankar, Northwestern University
Jonathan Shannon, Hunter College
Aradhana Sharma, Wesleyan University
Kim Shively, Kutztown University
David Shorter, UCLA
Gerald Sider, CUNY Graduate Center
Audra Simpson, Columbia University
Susan Slyomovics, UCLA
Llyn Smith, Humboldt State University
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Shannon Walsh, City University of Hong Kong
Margot Weiss, Wesleyan University

Harvey Weiss, Yale University
Paige West, Columbia University
Mark Westmoreland, Stockholm University
Livia Wick, American University of Beirut
Jessica Winegar, Northwestern University
Lisa Wynn, Macquarie University
Angela Zito, New York University

In addition, 46 scholars have elected to sign this statement anonymously.

These include at least:

30 untenured faculty
5 post-doctoral fellows
5 graduate students

You can join by sending your name and affiliation (for purposes of identification only) to anthroboycott [at] gmail [dot] com. (anthroboycott@gmail.com)

If you wish to sign anonymously, please write "CONFIDENTIAL" in the subject line of your email.

<http://mondoweiss.net/2014/10/anthropologists-academic-institutions>