



## **JUSTICE IS A UNIVERSAL VALUE: UPHOLD THE RIGHT TO BOYCOTT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE**

**Since Donald Trump came to power, his administration has led efforts to repress and intimidate those working in support of the progressive values of freedom, justice, and equality.** Recent examples of the rising tide of authoritarianism in the Trump era include the Trump administration's revocation of the visa of Fatou Bensouda, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court who had called for a probe into possible war crimes committed by U.S. forces in Afghanistan; Trump's incitement to violence against Rep. Ilhan Omar, a leading progressive voice in Congress, as a Black, Muslim, refugee woman; and the Trump administration's travel ban on Palestinian leader Omar Barghouti, who has championed the use of boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) tactics to hold Israel accountable for its oppression of the Palestinian people.

**This repression is part of a larger right wing, racist, and pro-war agenda that the Trump administration has enacted since it first days in office.** This agenda threatens every marginalized community and has included the Muslim Ban, violence against immigrants and asylum seekers at the U.S./Mexico border, and doubling down on backing Saudi Arabia's bombing of Yemen.

**In the face of this agenda and its accompanying repression, we need to be even more committed to our demands around freedom, historical justice, and equality for all people, including the Palestinian people.** Trump has showcased his particular disdain towards the struggle for Palestinian rights by moving the U.S. embassy to occupied Jerusalem, refusing to hold Israel accountable for its massacre of Palestinians throughout the Great March of Return, and celebrating close ties to fellow right-wing leader and Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu, who won the recent Israeli election by inciting violence against Palestinians and vowing to annex the militarily occupied West Bank.

**In the face of the rising tide of global right-wing repression against movements for justice, it is concerning that most members of Congress, instead of pushing back against Trump's efforts to ban and intimidate those championing progressive values such as Rep. Omar and Barghouti, are helping instead create an environment that allows these attacks to thrive.** H. Res. 246, which currently has 115 Democratic co-sponsors, seeks to condemn Palestinian efforts to hold Israel accountable for long-standing and ongoing violations of their rights through the use of the time-honored tactics of boycotts, divestment, and sanctions. This resolution demonizes the act of boycott, a First Amendment-protected political change tactic vital to historic social justice victories.

**Congress must move from complicity in oppression to support for justice.** Just as Congress condemned the use of U.S. military aid to Saudi Arabia in harming Yemenis, consistent application of progressive values demands Congress condemn the use of U.S. military aid to Israel in harming Palestinians. Instead, H. Res. 246 undermines efforts to work towards human rights and a just peace, and gives the greenlight to Israel to continue its violence against Palestinians.

**We have the right to boycott for justice in Palestine, just as we have the right to boycott in protest of gun violence, transphobic laws, racism, and exploitative labor practices, whether perpetrated by the government or companies.** Boycotts have been utilized by justice movements across place and time: the Montgomery bus boycott, the boycott of North Carolina over anti-trans legislation, Super Bowl and NBA champions' refusal to visit the Trump White House, consumers urging companies to stop advertising on FOX News over the network's racism, and municipalities boycotting and divesting from the banks funding the Dakota Access Pipeline and prison corporate profiteers are all prime examples. In the same spirit, the Palestinian call for BDS was inspired by a similar call during the South African anti-apartheid movement, which eventually moved Congress to pass sanctions against the apartheid government of South Africa.

**Demonizing the use of boycotts for justice in the case for the Palestinian people fuels racist attacks against supporters of the tactic such as Rep. Omar.** There is a global divide today between those who believe in freedom and equality for all, and those who justify racial and religious supremacy. While every struggle for freedom, from Palestine to the U.S., is unique, our values bring us together. Just as a coalition of groups came together in defense of Rep. Omar and successfully advocated to pass a resolution condemning all forms of racism, we call on Congress to protect our right to boycott for justice—without exception.

**As progressives, we support freedom and justice and apply those values across the board, without exception.** Supporting freedom, justice, and equality for the Palestinian people is an inextricable part of the progressive agenda, while supporting the Israeli government's ongoing denial of Palestinian rights through separate-and-unequal apartheid policies is an inextricable part of the right-wing agenda.

**Congress should be pushing a new progressive vision for the world, one in which all people are free, and in which we uphold justice for all—equal rights, historical justice, and freedom—from the U.S. to Palestine.** This includes protecting the right of people to engage in the protest tactics of boycott necessary to achieve this vision, from environmentalists to water protectors to Black Lives Matter activists to immigrant and women's rights advocates.

**With rising authoritarianism and efforts to crush dissent across the globe, we echo the words of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the reminder of Dr. Angela Davis as we assert that justice is indivisible and that all people have the right to boycott in support of this core principle.**

Signed,

American Muslims for Palestine  
Arab American Civic Council  
Arab Resource & Organizing Center  
BYP100 DC  
Cambridge Bethlehem People to People Project  
Center for Constitutional Rights  
CODEPINK  
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)  
Delawareans for Palestinian Human Rights (DelPHR)  
Eyewitness Palestine  
FITNA - Feminist Islamic Troublemakers of North America  
Freedom to Thrive

Friends of Sabeel North America  
Green Mountain Solidarity With Palestine  
Green Party of New York  
Guilford Peace Alliance  
Iowans for Palestine  
Jewish Voice for Peace  
Madison-Rafah Sister City Project  
Million Hoodies Movement for Justice  
MPower Action  
National Lawyers Guild  
Palestine Legal  
Palestinian Rights Committee of Upper Hudson  
Peace Action  
Palestinian Youth Movement  
Red Nation  
Revolutionary Love Project  
SIREN  
The Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace & Justice  
U.S. Palestinian Community Network  
United Methodists for Kairos Response  
US Campaign for Palestinian Rights  
Washington Advocates for Palestinian Rights  
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.

Noura Erakat, Human Rights Attorney  
Marc Lamont Hill, Academic, Author, & Activist  
Molly Crabapple, Artist  
Donna Nevel, Jews Against Anti-Muslim Racism  
Ahmad Abuznaid, National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)  
Bill Fletcher, Jr., TransAfrica Forum\*  
Zaina Alsous, Dream Defenders  
Remi Kanazi, Poet  
Nancy Kricorian, Writer

Michael Yoshii, RCal Nevada United Methodist Church  
Professor Hatem Bazian, American Muslims for Palestine  
Iyad Afalqa, Arab American Caucus of California Democratic Party\*  
Lara Kiswani, Arab Resource & Organizing Center (AROC)  
Reverend Bonnie Van Overbeke, Bethlehem Partnership United Church of Christ\*  
Haynes Lund, Bishop's Committee for Justice & Peace in the Holy Land  
Khury Petersen-Smith, Black 4 Palestine  
William Hodgkinson, Brandeis Students For Justice In Palestine  
Sameena Usman, CA ADEM D25  
Cornelius Moore, California Newsreel\*  
Kathy Roberts, Cambridge Bethlehem People to People Project  
Salih Booker, Center for International Policy  
Marla Marcum, Climate Disobedience Center  
Jack Laun, Colombia Support Network\*  
Courtney Childs, Corvallis Palestine Solidarity  
James Sues, Council on American-Islamic Relations - New Jersey\*

Zahra Billoo, Council on American-Islamic Relations - San Francisco Bay Area\*  
Steve Krevisky, Connecticut Peace & Solidarity Coalition  
Maria Marroquin, Day Worker Center of Mountain View\*  
Fadi Saba, Defending Rights & Dissent  
Ceceli Lavan, Dominican Sisters\*  
Sydney Miller, Dorchester People for Peace  
Alison Gottlieb, Dorchester People for Peace\*  
Randolph Urmston, Episcopal Bishop's Committee (Western WA) for Justice & Peace in the Holy Land  
John E. Peck, Family Farm Defenders  
Peter Lowber, First Parish Cambridge  
Timothy Cordon, First Unitarian Society - Madison Social Justice Ministry  
Rasha Mubarak, Florida Young Democrats\*  
Rev. Donald Wagner, FOSNA  
Skip Schiel, Friends Meeting at Cambridge  
Gabriel Berger, Georgetown Solidarity Committee\*  
Ray Doherty, Green Mountain Solidarity With Palestine  
Ash-Lee Woodard Henderson, Highlander Research & Education Center  
Allyn Maxfield-Steele, Highlander Research & Education Center  
Socorro Ramos-Avilés, Iniciativa Acción Puertorriqueña  
Phyllis Bennis, Institute for Policy Studies, New Internationalism Project\*  
Howard Lenow, Jewish Voice for Peace\*  
Chynnah McFadden, Jewish Voice for Peace - DC Metro  
Joe Sokolinsky, Jewish Voice for Peace - Madison  
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Lorraine Malcoe, Jewish Voice for Peace - Milwaukee  
Sandra Pasch, Jewish Voice for Peace - Milwaukee  
David L. Mandel, Jewish Voice for Peace - Sacramento  
Elsa Auerbach, Jewish Voice for Peace Boston\*  
Jamie Jackson, Jewish Voice for Peace Kansas City  
Alan Levine, Jews Say No!  
Reverend Emily McNeill, Journey United Church of Christ\*  
Reverend Sandy J. Damhof, Journey United Church of Christ  
Sherrill Hogen, Kairos/Franklin County Justice for Palestine\*  
Jean Fallon, Maryknoll Sisters\*  
Naila Jirmanus, Mass Peace Action  
Amari Sutton, SMellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow '19  
Stanley Heller, Middle East Crisis Committee  
Janan Najeeb, Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition  
Rachel Ida Buff, Milwaukee Jewish Voice for Peace\*  
Catherine Murphy, Minnesota Peace Project  
Sylvia Schwarz, MN Break the Bonds Campaign  
Steve Chandler, Mountain View Housing Justice  
Margari Hill, Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (MuslimARC)\*  
Fatima Saied, Muslim Women's Organization  
Maryum Khwaja, Nasiha Counseling  
Huwaida Arraf, National Lawyers Guild, Palestine Subcommittee  
Ejaz Naqvi, Northern California Islamic Council  
Danielle Lightfoot, NYC DSA, Anti-War Working Group  
Korey Wheeler, Organize Florida

Stephanie Porta, Organize Florida  
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Susan Nye, Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East\*  
Rosann Benedict, Seattle Chapter, Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East  
Carol Lambiase, United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America  
Ahmed Bedier, United Voices for America  
Reverend Merle Showers, University United Methodist Church  
Karen Peterson, Upper New York United Methodist Task Force on Peace with Justice in Palestine/Israel  
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Haitham Salawdeh, US Palestinian Community Network\*  
Guy Blais, Veterans for Peace  
Jim Brasile, Veterans For Peace Chapter 42  
Paul Noursi, Virginia Coalition for Human Rights \*  
Elizabeth Aaronsohn, Professor Emerita CCSU, We Refuse to Be Enemies\*  
Bonnie Block, WI Coalition to Ground the Drones & End the Wars\*  
Kate Kizer, Win Without War\*  
James Bhandary-Alexander, Yale Law School\*  
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*\*organization listed for identification purposes only*