

Resolution to Endorse the Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS

Adopted at the Annual General Meeting of the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA), **9 May 2025**.

Please note: this Resolution was proposed by a collective of TaPRA members following TaPRA's [Members-Led Motions Process](#) and was adopted by democratic vote at the 2025 AGM, passing with a 95% majority of the vote and meeting TaPRA's [quoracy standards](#). The Resolution will be carried forward by the Executive Committee in collaboration with the broader membership, in a process communicated and reflected on at each subsequent AGM.

TaPRA notes that:

- Regardless of whether a ceasefire is active, Israel's ongoing destruction of Palestinian life, rooted in over 75 years of oppression, has persisted unabated after the [ICJ](#)'s January 2024 ruling on the plausible risk of genocide in Gaza, with intensified violence in the West Bank;
- [Scholasticide](#) and cultural erasure constitute Israel's genocidal campaign: [all universities](#) in Gaza have now been destroyed, thousands of students and professors killed, and [theatres and artists](#) targeted by Israeli military attacks;
- [International action](#) taken by artists and academics in solidarity with Palestinians, including our organization's existing [actions for Palestine](#);
- The Palestinian civil society call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions ([BDS](#)) including the call for academics worldwide to support the boycott ([PACBI](#)) of Israeli academic institutions due to their [complicity](#) in violating Palestinian rights guaranteed by international law, including academic freedom and the right to education.

TaPRA believes that:

- As we witness scholasticide in Palestine, it is urgent for research organisations to act in solidarity with our Palestinian colleagues. By joining international efforts to halt scholasticide, TaPRA follows its [constitutional mission](#) to 'represent and protect the best interests of research and researchers' in theatre and performance;
- Supporting colleagues in academia and culture in Palestine enacts the [TaPRA manifesto](#)'s stated aim to 'open our community to international voices and global concerns'. Responding to calls from Palestinian civil society upholds TaPRA's commitments to 'build coalitional politics' and 'practice anti-oppression and (radical) hope'.

TaPRA resolves to:

1. Support

Publicly support **rebuilding of the Palestinian education system** in Gaza by: investigating routes for taking up the [May 2024 call](#) from the Emergency Committee of Universities in Gaza;

2. Boycott

Refuse engagement with **Israeli academic institutions** as part of the international [PACBI](#) movement. The academic boycott targets Israeli academic institutions, not individual academics (for details, [see here](#));

3. Defend Academic Freedom

Actively support theatre researchers and artists whose right to speak, research, or create work as or in defence of Palestinians is under attack;

4. Divest

Refuse engagement with any **corporation** involved in supporting Israeli occupation, apartheid, ethnic cleansing or genocide in Palestine (for details, [see here](#)).

9 May 2025

FAQS FOR TAPRA MEMBERS

(COMPILED BY TAPRA BDS COLLECTIVE, MARCH 2025)

Please note: these FAQs were compiled for the purpose of TaPRA's AGM on 9 May 2025, as a contextual document informing a members' vote at that meeting. This document may therefore be updated subsequently to reflect the needs of the organisation after the formal adoption of the Resolution at that AGM.

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ABOUT THE BOYCOTT, DIVEST, SANCTION MOVEMENT (BDS)

1. What does it mean to 'boycott, divest, sanction'?

- “BOYCOTTS involve withdrawing support from Israel's apartheid regime, complicit Israeli sporting, cultural and academic institutions, and from all Israeli and international companies engaged in violations of Palestinian human rights.
- DIVESTMENT campaigns urge banks, local councils, churches, pension funds and universities to withdraw investments from the State of Israel and all Israeli and international companies that sustain Israeli apartheid.
- SANCTIONS campaigns pressure governments to fulfil their legal obligations to end Israeli apartheid, and not aid or assist its maintenance, by banning business with illegal Israeli settlements, ending military trade and free-trade agreements, as well as suspending Israel's membership in international forums such as UN bodies and FIFA.”¹

2. Who is calling for BDS?

Since 2005, Palestinian civil society, unions, networks and cultural organisations, spearheaded by the Palestinian BDS National Committee and the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI).

3. What are the BDS movement's demands?

- “Ending [Israel's] occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall.
- Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality.
- Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194.”²

4. Will the boycott end?

PACBI calls for Israeli academic and cultural institutions to meet the above three demands of the BDS movement, and to “Publicly recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as enshrined in international law [...] and End all forms of complicity in violating Palestinian rights as stipulated in international law.”³

5. Is BDS antisemitic?

BDS is directed against the violent actions of the State of Israel and complicit institutions, not against the Jewish people.

The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism clearly states that “Boycott, divestment and sanctions are commonplace, non-violent forms of political protest against states. In the Israeli case they are not, in and of themselves, antisemitic.” The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism defines antisemitism as “discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish).” The Declaration originated in Jerusalem and was produced by international scholars (including legal scholars) and

¹ <https://bdsmovement.net/what-is-bds>

² <https://bdsmovement.net/what-is-bds>

³ <https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi/cultural-boycott-guidelines>

members of civil society. It exists to offer a clearer core definition and set of guidelines than those provided elsewhere, such as the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition. TaPRA has not adopted the IHRA Definition.

In the UK, several Jewish-led organisations have called for an end to the conflation of antisemitism and anti-Zionism, and for an end to Israeli occupation, discrimination and violence against Palestinians, noting that the fight against antisemitism is bound to the fight against all forms of racism and oppression. These include Na'amod, the Black-Jewish Alliance, Jewish Network for Palestine UK, and Jewish Voice for Labour (which explicitly advocates for BDS). A BDS movement “from within” also exists in Israel.

6. What else can I do for BDS?

You can boycott specific brands and products and get involved in localised campaigns.

ABOUT THE ACADEMIC AND CULTURAL BOYCOTT

7. What is the academic boycott of Israel?

‘The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) has advocated, since 2004, for a boycott of Israeli academic and cultural institutions. This is based on the fact that these institutions are deeply complicit in planning, implementing, justifying and/or whitewashing the Israeli system of oppression that has denied Palestinians their basic rights guaranteed by international law, or has hampered their exercise of these rights, including academic freedom and the right to education. There is a growing number of anti-colonial Israelis who support BDS, including the cultural boycott of Israel.

Note: The PACBI Guidelines for the International Academic Boycott of Israel are the authoritative guide for academic boycott of Israel. They can be viewed here.’

8. Why is an academic boycott necessary?

Israeli universities are directly involved in the Israeli state’s perpetration of genocide, including through the development of weapons and military doctrines; discursive and moral justification/normalisation; discrimination against non-Jewish students; and complicity in human rights violations. Scholasticide is a key element of the oppression, violence and genocide of Palestinians by Israel. ⁴

9. What is “scholasticide”?

Coined by Professor Karma Nabulsi, this refers to the “systematic destruction of Palestinian education by Israel.” ⁵ Following October 7th 2023, every university in Gaza has been bombed.

⁴ <https://scholarsagainstawar.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/SAWP-Actions-Against-Scholasticide-Toolkit.pdf>

⁵ <https://scholarsagainstawar.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/SAWP-Actions-Against-Scholasticide-Toolkit.pdf>

10. What does the academic boycott include?

PACBI stipulates that “Israeli cultural institutions [...] all their products, and all the activities they sponsor or support must be boycotted by cultural organizations and cultural workers worldwide.”⁶ This includes “normalization projects” involving Palestinians and/or other Arabs along with Israelis, based on the premise of parity.

The PACBI academic and cultural boycott applies to formal links with Israeli universities, cultural organisations and other institutions, not to individual Israeli scholars, unless such individuals are “representing the state of Israel or a complicit Israeli institution”.⁷

The BDS movement outlines the following as violations of the boycott:

- “Academic projects or activities sponsored by Israel, complicit Israeli institutions or Israel lobby groups
- Research and development projects with complicit Israeli academic institutions, the Israeli government or complicit corporations
- International academic activities receiving funding from Israel, its lobby groups or universities
- Speeches (including debates) at international venues by Israeli state officials or representatives of complicit academic institutions
- Schemes involving international students or academics enrolling at a complicit Israeli institution
- Awards given to Israeli state officials or complicit Israeli institutions or their representatives
- Normalization projects
- Membership of all Israeli associations in world bodies
- Publishing in or refereeing articles for journals based at complicit Israeli universities
- Providing advice, review or referee services to Israeli universities”⁸

11. Why does the BDS movement oppose hearing both Israeli and Palestinian perspectives?

PACBI describes these as “normalization projects” that treat Israeli and Palestinian perspectives as if they emerged from a level playing field, normalizing violently unequal power imbalances. Refers to the acceptance of Israeli policies and actions—particularly its occupation of Palestinian territories—as a standard or unremarkable reality, without challenging the systems of oppression or addressing the power imbalance between Palestinians and Israelis. Such projects constitute an implicit denial of the magnitude of Israel’s violence against Palestinians, which amounts to genocide.

12. What other academic organisations have adopted a BDS resolution?

⁶ <https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi/cultural-boycott-guidelines>

⁷ <https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi/cultural-boycott-guidelines>

⁸ <https://bdsmovement.net/academic-boycott>

- African Literature Association supports the boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions: <http://africanlit.org/about-the-ala/ala-resolutions-and-executive-letters/>
- American Studies Association Academic and Cultural Boycott Campaign: [Council Statement on the Resolution | ASA](#)
- Association for Asian American Studies Proposal to Boycott Israeli Academic Institutions (Adopted April 20, 2013): [Resolution: for AAAS to honor the call of Palestinian civil society for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions; and to support](#)
- Association for Humanist Sociology votes to support the academic and cultural boycott of Israel: <https://www.humanist-sociology.org/bds.html>
- British Society for Middle Eastern Studies. <https://www.brismes.ac.uk/about-us/resolutions>
- Critical Ethnic Studies Association Resolution supporting Academic Boycott <http://www.usacbi.org/2014/07/critical-ethnic-studies-association-passes-bds-resolution-supporting-academic-boycott/>
- CUNY's Doctoral Student Council Resolution endorsing the boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions <http://www.usacbi.org/2016/04/cuny-doctoral-students-council-endorses-the-boycott-of-israeli-academic-institutions/>
- Middle Eastern Studies Association: <https://mesana.org/about/resolutions>
- National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies Annual Conference Endorses Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions: <http://www.usacbi.org/2015/04/national-association-of-chicana-and-chicano-studies-endorses-boycott-of-israeli-academic-institutions/>
- Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Declaration in Support of the Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions: <https://naisa.org/about/council-statements/naisa-council-declaration-of-support-for-the-boycott-of-israeli-academic-institutions/>
- Peace and Justice Studies Association (PJSA) votes to endorse the Boycott, Divestment Sanctions Campaign: <https://www.peacejusticestudies.org/pjsa-endorses-bds-campaign/>

13. What about the cultural boycott?

PACBI is the Palestinian campaign for cultural *and* academic boycott. Like the academic boycott, the cultural boycott targets Israeli cultural institutions not Israeli individuals - it is about complicity not identity. They urge cultural workers and cultural organisations to boycott and work towards the cancellation of activities that involve Israel, its lobby groups and complicit institutions or that whitewash Israel's human rights violations.

Like its universities, Israel's cultural institutions are part of the ideological and institutional scaffolding of the regime of occupation, settler-colonialism and apartheid against the Palestinian people. When international artists perform at Israeli cultural venues and institutions, they help to create the false impression that Israel is a "normal" country like any other. The absolute majority of Palestinian writers, artists and cultural centers have endorsed the cultural boycott of Israel, and there is a growing number of anti-colonial Israelis who support BDS, including the cultural boycott of Israel.

TaPRA members who are culture workers and artists are encouraged to engage with the demands of the cultural boycott. This involves not performing or exhibiting in Israel, boycotting Israeli cultural organisations and cultural products that are commissioned by an official Israeli body, boycotting events sponsored by an official Israeli body or complicit organisation and boycotting 'normalisation' projects.

ABOUT BDS AT TAPRA

14. Does a commitment to BDS align with TaPRA's constitution?

According to its constitution, TaPRA does not express a political affiliation but will seek to represent and protect the best interests of research and researchers with respect to issues that pertain to the profile and policies affecting the theatre and performance research community.

BDS is not a political affiliation; it is an institutional practice committed to the best interests of research and researchers, namely, opposing violence, discrimination and oppression in all their forms.

15. Does a commitment to BDS align with TaPRA's manifesto?

The BDS movement seeks to use non-violent means to prevent the oppression and violence inflicted upon Palestinians by the Israeli state, and the total destruction of educational infrastructure meted out to Palestinian communities during Israeli attacks. This aligns with TaPRA's values of care-taking and anti-oppression. The BDS commitment to international solidarity and justice resonates with TaPRA's goal of fostering border-thinking, decentering dominant scholarly practices, and engaging with global concerns in dance, performance, and theatre studies.

16. How will BDS be implemented at TaPRA?

- TaPRA will not take place on land occupied by the Israeli state, including at Israeli universities.
- TaPRA will not undertake international academic activities receiving funding from Israel, its lobby groups or universities.
- TaPRA will not undertake research projects with complicit Israeli academic institutions, the Israeli government or complicit corporations (particularly military corporations, and lobby groups) including TaPRA-led publications in journals based at complicit Israeli universities.
- TaPRA will not invite keynotes from representatives of complicit Israeli academic institutions.
- TaPRA will not support normalisation research projects.
- The PACBI academic and cultural boycott applies to formal links with Israeli universities, cultural organisations and other institutions, not to individual Israeli

scholars, unless such individuals are “representing the state of Israel or a complicit Israeli institution”.⁹

17. How would TaPRA’s commitment to BDS affect individual members’ actions?

As an organisation, TaPRA would be committed to adhering to the BDS movement's guidelines. Individual members, however, retain the autonomy to make personal decisions regarding their academic collaborations and research activities. This distinction respects personal academic freedom while upholding the organisation's collective commitment to human rights and international law.

18. How does this affect Israeli members of TaPRA?

Rooted in the principles of international law and universal human rights, the BDS movement, including PACBI, opposes boycotting individuals based on their identity (such as citizenship, race, gender, or religion) or personal opinions. However, if an individual represents the state of Israel or a complicit Israeli institution (e.g., as a dean, rector, or president), or is enlisted to support Israel’s efforts to "rebrand" itself, their activities fall within the scope of the institutional boycott advocated by the BDS movement.

Being Israeli, or being affiliated with an Israeli academic institution does not, in itself, warrant applying the boycott.

19. How and with whom can I discuss BDS at TaPRA?

Email taprabdscollective@gmail.com, and the BDS Collective will get back to you. This email address will be active for 6 months following the TaPRA AGM on 9 May 2025, and then reviewed.

Update: for any questions relating to BDS at TaPRA after 2025, please email: exec@tapra.org.

⁹ <https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi/cultural-boycott-guidelines>