



A Message from Faith Organizations in the United States

Laws that penalize support for Palestinians' human rights violate Americans' rights.

We are members of faith communities in the United States whose congregations or denominations have adopted resolutions to boycott products made in Israeli settlements — built on occupied Palestinian lands in violation of international law and longstanding official U.S. policy — or have implemented a screen to divest from companies that profit from the 50-year-old Israeli military occupation of Palestine. These resolutions affirm our commitment to a just peace for all Palestinians and Israelis.

We are alarmed by legislation recently passed in a number of states penalizing participation in the nonviolent, grassroots Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement for Palestinian rights and by similar legislation that is proposed in the U.S. Congress. In August, the Kansas State Department of Education used the state's anti-BDS legislation to bar a member of the Mennonite church, a math teacher and curriculum coach in Wichita, Kansas, from participating in a program to train other math teachers.

This is a dangerous precedent that threatens to extend repression of Palestinians living under Israeli military rule by muzzling the right of Americans to free speech.

WE CALL ON ALL AMERICANS to join us and the ACLU in defending our First Amendment right to freedom of speech and on our state representatives and members of Congress to reject anti-BDS legislation as an infringement on the rights of American citizens.

Accordingly, the ACLU has filed suit against the Kansas Commissioner of Education in defense of this school teacher and her right to boycott.

Anti-BDS laws that have already been enacted in several states and similar legislation that is proposed in Congress effectively penalize actions taken by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Methodist Church, the Mennonite Church USA, the United Church of Christ, and other denominations; and tens of thousands of Muslim, Jewish, Christian, and secular Americans who support boycotts and divestment aimed at ending Israel's violations of Palestinian human rights.

As faith leaders, we have long used the nonviolent instruments of boycott and divestment in our work for justice and peace. These economic measures have proven to be powerful tools for social change, from strengthening labor rights for farm workers to ending apartheid in South Africa. As has been warned by the ACLU and other civil liberties groups, anti-BDS legislation is an extremely grave attack on free speech that threatens the use of boycotts, divestment, and sanctions for other peace and human justice causes.

SIGNATORIES

Alliance of Baptists	Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
Israel/Palestine Mission Network, Presbyterian Church (USA)	Quaker Palestine Israel Network
Mennonite Palestine Israel Network	Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East
Methodist Federation for Social Action	United Church of Christ Palestine Israel Network
Presbyterian Church (USA)	United Methodists for Kairos Response

ENDORSEMENTS

American Muslims for Palestine	Jewish Voice for Peace Rabbinical Council
Chicago Faith Coalition on Middle East Policy	Kairos USA
Christians Witnessing for Palestine	Middle East Task Force of the Chicago Presbytery
Christian-Jewish Allies for a Just Peace in Israel-Palestine	NorCal Friends of Sabeel
Episcopal Peace Fellowship Palestine Israel Network	Palestine-Israel Action Group, Ann Arbor Friends Quakers
Friends of Sabeel-Colorado	Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace
Friends of Sabeel North America	UCC Central Atlantic Conference Palestine Israel Network
Indiana Center for Middle East Peace	United Methodists' Holy Land Task Force,
Interfaith Alliance for Peace in the Holy Land, Tampa Bay, FL	of the California-Pacific Conference, UMC
Jewish Voice for Peace	US Campaign for Palestinian Rights
	Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace

This message was paid for by Friends of Sabeel North America.

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