



**Boycott
Divestment
Sanctions**

The Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC) is a wide coalition of the largest Palestinian mass organizations, trade unions, networks and organizations.

Member organizations:

- Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine
- General Union of Palestinian Workers
- Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions
- Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO)
- Palestinian National Institute for NGOs
- Federation of Independent Trade Unions
- Global Palestine Right of Return Coalition
- Occupied Palestine and Syrian Golan Heights Initiative
- General Union of Palestinian Women
- Union of Palestinian Farmers
- Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (STW)
- National Committee for Grassroots Resistance
- Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)
- National Committee to Commemorate the Nakba
- Civic Coalition for the Defense of Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem Coalition for Jerusalem
- Union of Palestinian Charitable Organizations
- Palestinian Economic Monitor
- Union of Youth Activity Centers-Palestine Refugee Camps

A Vote for Israel’s Accession to the OECD is a Vote in Support of Israel’s War Crimes and Other Grave Violations of International Law and Human Rights

Palestinian civil society urges the peoples and governments of OECD member states to defer Israel's OECD accession until it respects international law and the human rights of the Palestinian people and shows commitment to the fundamental values shared by OECD members.

BNC, Palestine, 15 March 2010 – The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is scheduled to convene in May 2010 in order to take a formal decision on Israel's application for membership in the Organization. A vote for Israel's accession to the OECD will be regarded by an overwhelming majority of Palestinians, Arabs, and people of conscience around the world as a decisive and far-reaching act of complicity in rewarding and perpetuating Israel's occupation, colonization and apartheid against the Palestinian people. Furthermore, it will irreparably undermine the rule of law and further entrench the culture of impunity that has enabled Israel to escalate its commission of war crimes and what is described by some leading international law experts as a prelude to genocide against Palestinians in the illegally besieged and occupied Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC) calls upon civil society organizations around the world to apply maximum pressure on their respective governments to ensure that Israel will not be admitted into the OECD, including by casting a vote *against* Israel’s accession in the final review of its application in May. Membership in the OECD will intensely fuel Israel's militarism, belligerence and aggression, further destabilizing the entire region, undermining security as well as social, political and economic development and making the quest for a just peace an unattainable goal.

The BNC deplores the OECD's persistent disregard of evidence submitted by human rights and civil society organizations in process of examination of Israel’s membership application [1]. The BNC further deplores the decision by the OECD to consider Israel's inability to provide economic statistics which distinguish between the state of Israel and the Palestinian and Syrian territories it occupies as not constituting an obstacle to Israel's OECD accession [2].

We affirm that the OECD becomes complicit in Israel’s unlawful acts, if the Organization fails to address – despite ample evidence - Israel’s reality as an oppressive occupying and colonizing power in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip and continues to ignore Israel’s system of institutionalized racial discrimination which is the root cause of the extreme poverty among its Palestinian citizens highlighted in OECD reports.

In light of the persistent refusal of many OECD member states to consider Israel’s violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, we call in

particular on OECD members that have voted in support of the recommendations of the UN Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (Goldstone Report) in the United Nations - Ireland, Mexico, Portugal, Switzerland and Turkey - to reaffirm their principled stand also in the context of Israel's bid for OECD membership. We urge you to maintain and reaffirm your position that Israel, like all other states, is to be held accountable to the standards of international law and universal human rights and must respect them before it can be welcomed as a member in the OECD.

Respect and compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law is a requirement for members under OECD instruments. The 1960 OECD Convention, for example, affirms that "economic strength and prosperity are essential for the attainment of the purposes of the United Nations, the preservation of individual liberty and the increase of general well-being." In the "Road Map for the accession of Israel to the OECD Convention" adopted by the Council in November 2007, the Council noted that in order for Israel to accede to the OECD it must demonstrate its commitment to "fundamental values" shared by all OECD members and meet related benchmarks. The stated OECD values include "a commitment to pluralist democracy based on the rule of law and the respect of human rights, adherence to open and transparent market economy principles and a shared goal of sustainable development."

Condemned as a state that is practicing occupation, colonization and apartheid by a recent authoritative legal study in South Africa supervised by international law expert and former UN human rights rapporteur, Prof. John Dugard, Israel is not in compliance with international law and OECD standards and benchmarks [3]. Israel has yet to comply with the recommendations of the UN Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict and investigate and prosecute where needed those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity that resulted in the death of more than 1,400 Palestinians, most of them civilians, in the winter of 2008/9. Israel has yet to lift its illegal blockade of the occupied Gaza Strip which has brought to the brink of starvation almost 1.5 million Palestinians, most of whom are refugees Israel had displaced and dispossessed back in 1948. It has yet to dismantle its illegal Wall in the occupied Palestinian West Bank in accordance with the 2004 International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion. Israel has yet to end its almost 43-year-old occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, reverse its colonial enterprise and release Palestinians detained and imprisoned. It has yet to transform its political and legal system in order to provide reparation for millions of Palestinian victims, including return for the refugees, and allow full and equal participation of its Palestinian citizens. Only then will Israel meet the standards of pluralist democracies valued by the OECD.

The BNC reiterates the concerns expressed on numerous occasions to the OECD by human rights and civil society organizations and calls upon the governments and peoples of OECD member states to **say no to Israel's bid for membership in the OECD.**

[1] See for example:

Letter to Mr. Angel Gurría, Secretary General, OECD (22 human rights and civil society organizations), 28 September 2008: www.arabhra.org/HraAdmin/UserImages/Files/NGO%20Letter%20to%20the%20OECD.pdf;
Letter to the Foreign Ministers of Non-EU OECD member states (16 organizations), January 2009: <http://www.badil.org/en/documents/category/36-regional-bodies>; and Arab Higher Monitoring Committee to the OECD, 27 Feb. 2010: <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1152638.html>

[2] See for example: <http://original.antiwar.com/cook/2010/03/08/israels-oecd-bid-poses-problems-for-members/>

[3] <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/Document-3227.phtml>