

## Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network (PIEN) Policy Statement on BDS

The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network Inc is a network of Australian Christians and supporters from numerous walks of life and denominations, united in our commitment to Jesus' mission of justice and peace.

As an organisation that seeks lasting peace and justice for the people of Palestine and Israel, PIEN and its members are greatly concerned by the situation in Palestine and Israel, including the Occupation since 1967 and human rights violations, and the consequences for Palestinian and Israeli people on a daily basis.

We have heard the calls of our brothers and sisters in Palestine and Israel who are actively working for justice and peace, including those voiced in the 2009 Kairos Palestine document and the 2017 statement from the National Coalition of Christian Organisations in Palestine.

In response, PIEN adopts this policy statement on boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) to guide our actions in support of peace and justice in Palestine and Israel.

### Regarding BDS, PIEN:

- **Affirms** that the BDS movement is pro-human rights, and for freedom, justice and equality for Palestinians and Israelis. It is an inclusive, non-violent human rights movement that rejects all forms of racism and discrimination and does not tolerate any act or discourse which adopts or promotes, among others, antisemitism<sup>i</sup>, anti-Arab racism, Islamophobia, sexism, xenophobia or homophobia.
- **Recognises** that boycotts involving economic, cultural, sporting and academic activities are a legitimate form of non-violent engagement and protest used by many individuals and organisations in a variety of contexts around the world and that BDS upholds the simple principle that Palestinians are entitled to the same rights as the rest of humanity.
- **Recognises** that all Israelis and Palestinians are entitled to live in freedom, security and justice.
- **Endorses** the Palestinian BDS National Committee's call which would involve ceasing patronage of the State of Israel and other entities (international and Israeli) that are involved in the violation of Palestinian human rights as well as complicit Israeli sporting, cultural and academic institutions.
- **Recognises** that the Palestinian BDS call asks international civil society groups and individuals to use BDS tactics until Israel meets its obligations under international law to:
  - end the Occupation of the Palestinian Territories since 1967 and to dismantle the Separation Wall/Barrier;
  - end discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel;
  - respect the right of return for Palestinians<sup>ii</sup>;and therefore that the Palestinian BDS call is time-limited and conditional and that the pressure should stop when Israel stops violating fundamental Palestinian rights.

- **Acknowledges** that Palestinian Christian organisations and statements endorse BDS measures including the 2009 Kairos Palestine document and the 2017 statement from the National Coalition of Christian Organisations in Palestine-NCCOP.
- **Recognises** that many Israeli and Jewish organisations across the globe have also endorsed BDS measures, including Jewish Voice for Peace (USA) and the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions.
- **Recognises** that BDS should not be applied against Israelis or other individuals, companies, institutions and organisations that oppose the Occupation, seek to end discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel and seek to uphold and defend the human rights of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and the Gaza Strip.

#### Therefore, PIEN:

- **Resolves** to support and participate in economic, cultural, sporting and/or academic actions as a form of non-violent response to the continuing occupation of Palestine. Such activities may include:
  - promoting a boycott of business, cultural, sporting and/or academic entities and events, or organisations that are complicit in maintaining the Occupation or perpetrating human rights abuses in Palestine;
  - promoting a boycott of goods produced in Israeli settlements in Palestine;
  - encouraging the development and patronage of business, cultural, sporting and/or academic entities or products that contribute to a just peace in Palestine and Israel;
  - advocating to church bodies to divest funds from businesses and other entities complicit in maintaining the Occupation or perpetrating human rights abuses in Palestine.
- **Notes** that PIEN may take such actions itself or add its voice in support of actions led by other organisations. Prior to agreeing to undertake or support any action PIEN will consider the rationale or justification for such action, unintended consequences of the action, and any other information available to it at the time. PIEN may choose not to support or undertake particular actions as a result of these considerations.
- **Urges** its members and supporters to participate in campaigns as they are able in their individual contexts. However, it recognises that the membership of PIEN is diverse, that members may take a different position on BDS from that expressed in this statement and that this policy is not binding on individual PIEN members.
- **Commits** to providing its members with information and tools about BDS, so they are equipped to make informed decisions about BDS and related actions.

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<sup>i</sup> PIEN notes the increasing propensity of the Israeli government and many political leaders, in characterising Israel as “the Nation State of the Jewish people”, to assert that any opposition to Israel’s policies is opposition to the ‘Jewish State’ and accordingly, antisemitic. PIEN rejects this and reserves the right, whether in relation to BDS or to other legitimate criticism of Israel’s policies, to promote such action or advocacy as it thinks appropriate.

<sup>ii</sup> We note that the Palestinian legal right of return may continue to be addressed in future negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians and the actual number of returnees, timing and/or compensation to refugees may be determined through a final agreement between Israelis, Palestinians and regional parties.