

## Omar Barghouti Background

Omar Barghouti is the co-founder of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement, and a key member of the Palestinian Boycott National Committee (BNC)

### Key Quotes:

“Ultimately, BDS aims to turn Israel into a pariah”<sup>1</sup>

“We oppose a Jewish state in any part of Palestine... [only] a sellout Palestinian would accept a Jewish state in Palestine.”<sup>2</sup>

Israeli Jews are “colonial settlers... I make a distinction between self-determination for Jewish settlers in Palestine, which I categorically oppose... Colonizers are not entitled to self-determination”<sup>3</sup>

“If the occupation ends, would that end your call for BDS? No, it wouldn’t”<sup>4</sup>

“Good riddance! The two-state solution for the Palestinian-Israel conflict is finally dead. But someone has to issue an official death certificate before the rotting corpse is given a proper burial and we can all move on and explore the more just, moral and therefore enduring alternative... the one-state solution... where, by definition Jews will be a minority”<sup>5</sup>

### The BNC

Barghouti is a key leader in the BNC, which is headquartered in Ramallah and coordinates the BDS Movement globally. Mahmoud Nawajaa, the General Coordinator of the BNC, has publicly supported Hamas’ armed wing - the Al Qassam Brigades - on social media.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, one of the groups in the BNC is the Council of National and Islamic Forces - a coalition of Palestinian groups which includes the racist terrorist organizations Hamas and Islamic Jihad.<sup>7</sup> The coordinator of the National and Islamic Forces is Khaled al-Batsh, a senior Islamic Jihad official.<sup>8</sup>

While the BDS Movement’s political platform seems less extremist, it demands that Israel, “respect, protect, and promote the right of Palestinian refugees to return” to Israel, rather than a future Palestinian state.<sup>9</sup> The “right of return” has been used as a euphemism for the elimination of Israel for 70 years.<sup>10,11</sup> Barghouti himself has acknowledged that, “a return for refugees would end Israel’s existence as a Jewish state”.<sup>12</sup>

### Undermining Academic Freedom

Barghouti is also a leading figure in the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). Aside from working towards the elimination of Israel and the violation of Jewish rights, this campaign actively undermines bedrock principles upon which universities are built, namely academic freedom and the free exchange of ideas. Academic boycotts against Israel have been condemned by the 47,000 member American Association of University Professors, 250-plus university and college presidents, and seven other academic associations.<sup>13</sup> Sari Nusseibeh, the president of the Palestinian Al Quds University, publicly opposed academic boycotts of Israel, calling instead for “cooperation based on mutual respect.”<sup>14</sup> In past years, 38 Nobel Laureates signed a joint letter deploring a proposed boycott of Israel because it is “antithetical to principles of academic and scientific freedom, antithetical to principles of freedom of expression and inquiry, and may well constitute discrimination by virtue of national origin;”<sup>15</sup>

PACBI's academic boycott guidelines also illustrate why the movement is so problematic.<sup>16</sup> The guidelines include calls for boycotts of:

- Study abroad programs in Israel.
- All cooperation projects involving, "Palestinians and/or other Arabs on one side and Israelis on the other" in which the Israeli side fails to fully capitulate to BDS's political demands. This means PACBI opposes any cooperation with Israelis unless they support the elimination of their own state and the violation of their own rights.
- Events co-sponsored by not just Israel and all of its academic institutions, but also events co-sponsored by organizations that "support" Israel. What "support" for Israel means is undefined.
- Events that take place in Israel, even if they are sponsored by international organizations rather than Israeli institutions.
- Any event where Israeli officials or representatives of Israeli academic institutions speak.

These guidelines call for blatant violations of academic freedom, hinder the free exchange of ideas, and are transparently anti-peace. The movement is antithetical to the bedrock principles of academia.

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Horowitz and Philip Weiss, "The BDS Movement at 10: An interview with Omar Barghouti," *Mondoweiss*, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015, at <http://mondoweiss.net/2015/07/movement-interview-barghouti>

<sup>2</sup> John Y. Jones, "Omar Barghouti – Strategies for Change," *Vimeo*, September 2013, at <https://vimeo.com/75201955>

<sup>3</sup> John Y. Jones, "Omar Barghouti – Strategies for Change," *Vimeo*, September 2013, at <https://vimeo.com/75201955>

<sup>4</sup> Marcy Tracy, "With All the Boycott Israel Talk, What Is BDS?" *The New Republic*, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014, at <https://newrepublic.com/article/116449/scarlett-johansson-john-kerry-scare-bds-israel-controversy>

<sup>5</sup> Omar Barghouti, "Relative Humanity, the Essential Obstacle to a Just Peace in Palestine," *Counterpunch*, December 12-14, 2003, at <http://www.counterpunch.org/2003/12/12/relative-humanity-the-essential-obstacle-to-a-just-peace-in-palestine/>

<sup>6</sup> European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine, "International Conference of Local Governments and Civil Society Organizations in Support of Palestinian Rights," December 2, 2014, at <http://www.eccpalestine.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Provprog-SEVILLE-with-names-1DEC2014.pdf>; Mahmoud Nawajaa, Facebook Post, July 14, 2014, at <https://www.facebook.com/mahmoud.nawajaa/posts/10152621485783185> (Above the post Nawajaa wrote "the Qassam style! Glory to resistance and eternity to martyrs.")

<sup>7</sup> BDS Movement, "Palestinian BDS National Committee," n.d., at <http://www.bdsmovement.net/bnc>; International Solidarity Movement, "Statement by the Palestinian National and Islamic Forces in Hebron on the CPT Hostages in Iraq Statement by the Palestinian National and Islamic Forces in Hebron on the CPT Hostages in Iraq," December 6, 2005, at <http://palsolidarity.org/2005/12/statement-by-the-palestinian-national-and-islamic-forces-in-hebron-on-the-cpt-hostages-in-iraq/>

<sup>8</sup> Maan News, "National and Islamic Forces meet Deputy Secretary-General's delegation," May 25, 2014, at <http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=699735>; Mouin Rabbani, "Between Hamas and the PA: An Interview with Islamic Jihad's Khalid al-Batsh," *Jadaliyya*, May 28, 2013, at <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/11916/between-hamas-and-the-pa-an-interview-with-islamic>

<sup>9</sup> BDS Movement, "Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS," July 9, 2005, at <http://www.bdsmovement.net/call>

<sup>10</sup> Yehoshafat Harkabi, *Arab Attitudes to Israel*, Israel Universities Press, 1974, p. 28, at <http://books.google.com/books?id=ocybbUgguOEC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<sup>11</sup> Barack Obama, "Obama: Opposes 'Right of Return Inside Israel,'" *YouTube*, May 2, 2008, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xatt3DmTXHo>

<sup>12</sup> Ali Mustafa, "'Boycotts work': An interview with Omar Barghouti," *Electronic Intifada*, May 31, 2009, at <http://electronicintifada.net/content/boycotts-work-interview-omar-barghouti/8263>

<sup>13</sup> William A. Jacobson, "List of Universities rejecting academic boycott of Israel (Update – 250!)," *Legal Insurrection*, December 22, 2013, at <http://legalinsurrection.com/2013/12/list-of-universities-rejecting-academic-boycott-of-israel/>

<sup>14</sup> Matthew Kalman, "Palestinian University Suspends Contacts With Israeli Academics," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 3, 2009 at <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=921>

<sup>15</sup> "Statement of Nobel Laureates on Academic Boycotts, Divestments and Sanctions (BDS) Actions Against Israeli Academics, Israeli Academic Institutions and Academic Centers and Institutes of Research and Training with Affiliations in Israel," November 1, 2010 at [http://israelcc.org/docs/countering-bds-documents/statement-of-nobel-laureates-on-academic-boycotts\\_spme.pdf](http://israelcc.org/docs/countering-bds-documents/statement-of-nobel-laureates-on-academic-boycotts_spme.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Palestinian Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel," July, 2014, at <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1108>