

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

BNC member organizations:

Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine

Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO)

Palestinian Nat'l Institute for NGOs

Global Palestine Right of Return Coalition

Palestinian Trade Union Coalition for BDS (PTUC-BDS)

Federation of Indep. Trade Unions

Gen. Union of Palestinian Workers

Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions

Gen. Union of Palestinian Women

Union of Palestinian Farmers

Gen. Union of Palestinian Teachers

Gen. Union of Palestinian Writers

Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees (PFUUEP)

Union of Professional Associations

Gen. Union of Palestinian Peasants

Union of Public Employees in Palestine-Civil Sector

Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (STW)

Nat'l Committee for Grassroots Resistance

Pal. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)

Nat'l Committee to Commemorate the Nakba

Civic Coalition for the Defense of Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem

Coalition for Jerusalem

Union of Pal. Charitable Organizations

Palestinian Economic Monitor

Union of Youth Activity Centers-Palestine Refugee Camps

Occupied Palestine and Syrian Golan Heights Initiative

BDS Victory: Alstom loses Saudi Haramain Railway contract worth \$10B

Occupied Palestine- 27-10-2011 -- The BDS National Committee (BNC) has declared a long sought-after victory as Alstom lost the bid for the second phase of the Saudi Haramain Railway project, worth 10 billion US dollars, after pressure from the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign, including effective campaigning from the newly launched *KARAMA*, a European campaign to Keep Alstom Rail And Metro Away.

In 2008 the BNC, the largest Palestinian civil society coalition, with partners in Europe and Israel, launched the **Derail Veolia and Alstom** campaign, due to the two companies' involvement in Israel's illegal Jerusalem Light Rail (JLR) project, which explicitly aims to "Judaize Jerusalem," according to official Israeli statements, by cementing Israel's hold on the illegal colonial settlements built on occupied Palestinian land in and around Jerusalem. Since then, Veolia has lost more than \$12B worth of contracts following boycott activism in Sweden, the UK, Ireland and elsewhere. Alstom, too, suffered substantial blows when the Swedish national pension fund AP7 excluded it from its investment portfolio, after having been excluded from the Dutch ASN Bank due to the company's involvement in Israel's occupation of Palestinian land, and has recently announced its intention to withdraw from the project.

The decision is in line with a decision adopted by consensus at the Arab Summit held in Khartoum in 2006 which condemned in the JLR project and called on "the two French companies [Alstom and Veolia] to immediately withdraw from the project," and demanding that punitive measures be taken against them "if they don't comply." The Arab Summit also urged the French government to take the necessary measure in this respect to honor its obligations under international law. In March 2010, the UN's Human Rights Council denounced Israel's JLR project for being "in clear violation of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions."

In commenting on the fierce competition between the Alstom-led consortium and its Spanish-led rival over the second phase of the lucrative Haramain Railway project, Emirati newspaper, Al-Ittihad, referred to "multiple factors" affecting the decision to award the contract, suggesting that political factors may have been taken into consideration.

The BNC and several partners have used private and public channels to urge the Saudi leadership to exclude Alstom from the second phase of this large project which will connect by rail Mecca with Medina after Alstom had won the much smaller contract for the first phase.

In 2009, BNC member organizations, Stop the Wall and the Civic Coalition to Defend Palestinians' Rights in Jerusalem, have produced in-depth research about Alstom's involvement in Israel's illegal JLR project. Copies were sent to Saudi officials, prompting Palestinian leaders to address Saudi authorities urging them to exclude Alstom from their contracts.

Jamal Juma'a, Stop the Wall coordinator and BNC Secretariat member commented on the news saying: "This huge victory will be celebrated in the BDS campaign worldwide. We are hopeful that this will be the first of many decisions to kick Alstom

out of the Arab world and beyond, sharply raising the price of its collusion in Israel's violations of Palestinian rights."

"The campaign to derail Veolia and Alstom will continue until they have ended their complicity with Israeli apartheid, and have paid reparations for the damage their actions have caused."

"The global Derail Veolia and Alstom campaign has sent a strong message to corporations aiding Israel's violations of international law: the price of their complicity will be extremely high."

"We are deeply grateful to all our global BDS partners who made this happen through three years of diligent and effective campaigning."

BDS National Committee (BNC)

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

*Business Week reporting Alstom's loss of the bid: <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2011-10-26/al-shoula-led-group-wins-saudi-contract-for-haramain-railway.html>

*Al-Ittihad first reported on the issue on its Arabic website <http://www.alittihad.ae/details.php?id=70106&y=2011%20#%20ixzz1bj8qviOo>

*The BNC is the largest Palestinian civil society coalition, representing a majority of Palestinian mass organizations, trade unions and networks: <http://www.bdsmovement.net/BNC>

*The BDS campaign was started in 2005 by Palestinian civil society. It calls for applying various forms of boycotts against Israel until it meets its obligations under international law and ends its occupation and colonization; ends its system of racial discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel, which fits the UN definition of apartheid; and grants Palestinian refugees their right of return in accordance with UN resolution 194.

*A brief history on the Derail Veolia and Alstom campaign, including a timelines of previous successes, can be viewed online. <http://www.bdsmovement.net/activecamps/veoliaalstom>. More information specifically on the financial institutions that have sold their shares in Alstom is available at <http://electronicintifada.net/content/divestment-campaign-gains-momentum-europe/8151>

*The full text of the UN Human Rights Council motion condemning the JLR is available online <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/262DD94458BA4CA2852576F000701580>

*The 2006 Arab Summit : "condemned the [JLR] project that aims to connect West Jerusalem with areas in the West Bank through occupied East Jerusalem, and affirms the illegality of this action, and calls on the two French companies [Alstom and Veolia] to immediately withdraw from the project, and take action against them if they don't comply, and we invite the French government to take the needed decision in this area based on its obligations under international law." <http://www.sis.gov.eg/VR/arab2008/arabic/html/sudan2.pdf>

*More information about the newly launched KARAMA, a European campaign to Keep Alstom Rail And Metro Away, is available on their website <http://derailalstom.org/>

*The documents compiled by Palestinian organisations in support of the campaign are available online: <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2009/jerusalem-light-railway-effects-legal-implications-591#.TqkdS5ulkVU>
<http://www.stophthewall.org/downloads/pdf/alstom.pdf>

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