

SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS CONGRESS

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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SASCO supports call for the Catholic University of Chile to adopt BDS

As we still fight for complete liberation including free education, we also stand in solidarity with those facing oppression worldwide. We have made clear our support of Palestinians enduring Israel's apartheid, colonization and occupation for decades.

We stand with the Palestinian people in the same way that we stand in solidarity with all oppressed peoples of the world. And indeed our solidarity with the oppressed is similar to your solidarity with us during the anti-apartheid movement.

Our solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the world is not a personal position but an organisational position that finds grounding in various resolutions of our movement. On Palestine, SASCO has for a long-time now endorsed and supported the BDS call and the #IsraeliApartheidWeek initiative.

We recognise effective solidarity when we see it and we know for a fact that isolation campaigns work. We believe that students and activists have a duty and responsibility to heed the Palestinian appeal to pressure Israel into respecting international law, through the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. We are also pleased that a growing number of Israelis and Jews also support this non-violent campaign to hold Israel accountable for its violations of human rights.

We are inspired by our progressive Israeli comrades that have taken the conscious decision to break ranks and denounce Israel as an apartheid state, furthermore we salute organisations like the Jewish Voice for Peace that are advancing the BDS campaign on university campuses in the name of freedom, justice and equality for Palestinians.

In South Africa there is a strong and solid support of the Palestinian struggle and boycott of Israel - particularly on university campuses. In 2011 the University of Johannesburg terminated its relations with Israel's Ben Gurion University ushering in the first academic boycott of Israel on the international stage. Also in 2011 our own organisation, the largest and oldest student movement in this country, adopted and endorsed the academic boycott of Israel. Last year we were proud to announce, from the largest university in this country, UNISA, that over 7 Student government bodies have adopted BDS. Our own South African Government Minister of Higher Education has called for our universities not to have ties with the Apartheid Government of Israel.

As Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said regarding Israeli institutions, “it can never be business as usual”. We know too well the role that academic institutions can play in either opposing on the one hand or on the other hand maintaining, promoting and normalizing injustices. The academic boycott was an important tool in our struggle to end apartheid in our country. So it is for the Palestinians now.

We support the call on the academic community of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile (UC) to end its university's complicity with Israel's crimes and to join us in the international struggle for freedom, justice and equality for the Palestinians. Essentially we are calling on UC to support the BDS campaign and be on the right side of history.

Indeed from South Africa to Latin America we are in solidarity with the Palestinian people in their pursuit of freedom, justice and liberation.

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