

# Boycott Goal is to Dismantle Israel

In his [May 24](#) and [June 7](#) columns in the Monitor, Robert Azzi presented a case for the “BDS movement,” which seeks to boycott, divest from and sanction Israel for its treatment of the Palestinians. Azzi distinguishes between a “limited” BDS movement, which seeks a boycott only of Israeli West Bank settlements and their products, and a track that calls for a total boycott of Israel.

The main BDS movement is the one seeking a total boycott of Israel, and Azzi appears to support this branch of the movement. Its ultimate goal is not merely to get Israel out of the West Bank but to dismantle the Jewish state of Israel and replace it with an Arab-majority state. It seeks to do this primarily by implementing the so-called “right of return” of the so-called “Palestinian refugees.” To understand this objective, we must review some history.

According to official U.N. statistics, the 1948 war that led to the founding of modern Israel created a refugee population of 726,000 Palestinians who fled their homes in what became the state of Israel. It is important to realize that the 1948 war, from the Jewish point of view, was a war for survival against Arab enemies who had openly called for genocide against the Jews of Palestine. Since the Arab nations refused to make peace with Israel in 1949 and spoke of using any returning refugees as a “fifth column” for destroying Israel, the Israeli leaders understandably refused to allow the return of the Palestinian refugees.

Arab and Palestinian leaders from 1949 on rejected any effort to solve the Palestinian refugee problem by resettling the refugees in third countries, because they refused to give up on the dream of returning to “Palestine” and taking it back

from the Jews. The U.N. agency that provides welfare services to the refugees, UNRWA, itself controlled by the Palestinians, has adopted a unique definition of who counts as a "Palestinian refugee": By UNRWA criteria, any patrilineal descendant of one of the original 1948 refugees counts, in perpetuity, as a "Palestinian refugee."

James G. Lindsay, former top legal counsel at UNRWA, writes: "UNRWA's definition of a refugee is a wholly internal creation, one used by no other agency or organization in the world."

In other words, for no other refugee population in the world is refugee status inheritable from one generation to the next in perpetuity. The original population of 726,000 has burgeoned to over 5 million registered Palestinian "refugees," even though only about 58,000 of the original refugees are still alive today, and it continues to grow exponentially.

Top Palestinian leaders of all parties continue to demand the "right of return" for this artificially inflated population of "refugees."

For example, as recently as Nov. 30, 2014, Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority president and leader of the Fatah Party, said: "We cannot recognize a Jewish state . . . (because) there are 6 million refugees who wish to return."

In other words, Mahmoud Abbas recognizes that implementing the "right of return" is incompatible with Israel remaining a Jewish country – and still he demands the "return" of the "refugees."

In fact, this demand is one of the main reasons that Israeli-Palestinian peace talks have always been a failure.

On July 30, 2000, only five days after the end of the failed peace talks at Camp David, Mahmoud Abbas said: "We were not prepared to limit the number of refugees who would be allowed

to return, even if they had proposed a number of 3 million refugees.”

Adding 5 million or 6 million Palestinian Arabs to the Israeli population of just over 6 million Jews and nearly 2 million Arabs would make Jews a minority in Israel, so no Israeli government could agree to peace on these terms.

Moreover, more than half of Israeli Jews are refugees from Arab countries with very traumatic memories of the violence and discrimination they faced for centuries under Arab majorities. They will never again allow themselves to live under Arab majority rule, nor should they.

The founding father of the BDS Movement, Omar Barghouti, has openly stated his opposition to the “two-state” solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In 2009, Barghouti stated, “You cannot reconcile the right of return for refugees with a two-state solution. . . . A return for refugees would end Israel’s existence as a Jewish state.”

Here we see the real point of the BDS movement: It is the continuation of the decades-long struggle to obliterate the Jewish state of Israel.

Azzi also mentions a more limited track of the BDS movement, namely, one that seeks to boycott only West Bank settlements and their products.

Even the limited boycott of Israel’s West Bank settlements is problematic, however. The two-state solution envisioned by the Oslo accords was based on the assumption that the larger Jewish communities just east of the 1949 armistice line, such as the ancient Jewish quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem and the Etzion Bloc, would be incorporated into Israel as part of any final peace treaty. Surely it is unfair to penalize Jews who wish to live in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem. Moreover, Israel has legitimate security interests in keeping control of

the Jordan River valley and its adjacent high ground to prevent movement of terrorists and weapons into the West Bank, especially since Hamas and its Iranian supporters have openly stated their goal of arming their cadres in the West Bank.

In short, there are very good reasons to oppose the BDS movement, reasons that have nothing to do with “ignoring considerations of justice” or “exclusion of the Palestinian narrative,” to quote Azzi’s tendentious words.

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