



# PALESTINE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN NEWSLETTER

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## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

**BEN JAMAL**

As I write this, we are at the midpoint of our Week of Action wrapped around the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The UN established this day in the hope that the enactment of solidarity in placing pressure on governments across the world would be a prelude to an end to the oppression of Palestinian people. Today, that solidarity is needed more than ever.

The Palestinian people are confronting an alliance between Israel, the US and authoritarian Arab regimes which has sought under guise of Trump's so-called deal of the century to eliminate their cause entirely. Although Trump is gone, we would be naïve to think Biden will now row back on all elements of the deal. Palestinians have called for a renewal of global solidarity in response to these assaults and as always we have responded with actions. You will see details in the following pages of the many actions we, collectively, taken.

Last week, I had the honour of speaking alongside the great anti-apartheid campaigner Ronnie Kasrils. He gave us a message of hope reminding us that the arc of history bends towards justice. But it does not do so unless we place weight collectively upon it. PSC is now busy making plans to take forward our campaigning in 2021. Thank you to all of you for what you did in 2020, and what you will do in 2021. Forward together to freedom, justice and equality.

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# VOICE FROM PALESTINE

SALEM BARAHMEH

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We are currently in a dark chapter in the history of our struggle for freedom, rights, equality and justice. Solidarity and advocacy for Palestine is being attacked, smeared, and made to be radioactive. Many are attempting to shrink our space and perpetuate the reality of apartheid we face. It is in times like these that we gain strength from one another, within the Palestinian movement or other movements for freedom, justice and equality around the world. We must invest in intersectionality and live by the understanding that we need to bring the majority of the world with us by standing together.

During this time, it is essential that we focus our efforts on connecting with these movements for climate justice, Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ rights, and many others. We must speak, communicate and build solidarity through a language that reflects our fundamental values that oppose the forces of fascism, ethno-nationalism, oppression, surveillance, consumption, exclusion and authoritarianism. Intersectionality is a critical praxis and framework for engaging in solidarity around the world with those that are oppressed.

Let's use this time to dismantle apartheid and build a new social contract in Palestine and around the world where everyone, regardless of who they are or where they come from, is afforded full freedom, justice and rights.

At the Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy and our digital platform Rabet, we try to harness the power of digital media and technology to connect with people and movements around the world through a narrative that centers Palestinian voice based on these values. This includes projects like Palestine Virtual Reality that offer 360-tours of Palestine or a show like "Teta's Kitchen" that highlights Palestinian cuisine, culture and geographu through cooking with Palestinian grandmothers. We want to reach beyond echo chambers of our own movement and speak to the majority of societies to push back on the shrinking space and advocate for accountability and justice.

The Palestine Solidary Campaign has been an essential partner and ally in the UK and in global campaigns and Palestinian advocacy. Whether it is challenging apartheid, divesting from injustice like campaigns on deleting Airbnb or fighting IHRA and the weaponization of anti-Semitism the PSC has been a leader in this space through intersectionality and upholding these values. We are looking forward to more work together and building a world all of us want to see.

# SPOTLIGHT ON...OUR WEEK OF ACTION



Thousands of people across the UK and globally took part in our Week of Action in opposition to Israel's continued violations of international law, including its illegal annexation plans under the banner "Stop Annexation, End Apartheid, Sanctions Now."

The Student Day of Action on November 25 saw young people across the country calling on their institutions to divest from companies complicit in Israel's grave breaches of Palestinian human rights based on PSC research.

The data found that UK universities invest over £450 million in complicit companies including some on the UN Human Rights Office's list of business enterprises involved in illegal Israeli settlements, based on stolen Palestinian land.

Hundreds of you from Brighton to Edinburgh, from Norwich to West Wales took part in the National Day of Action on November 28. Participants included 12 major trade unions, such as UCU, NEU, Unison and Unite as well as a variety of MPs, councillors, PSC branches, artists, public figures and individuals. The Trade Union Congress, who recently passed a motion which for first time in their history identifies Israel as a state practicing apartheid, also took part with President Gail Cartmail speaking out against "the grave human rights abuses being committed against the Palestinian people."

The PSC Rally for Palestine on November 29, co-hosted by Jewish Voice for Peace and the BDS Movement, was viewed by 17,000 people across the world. Speakers and performers included human rights activists, attorneys, political organisers, artists, comedians and public figures such as Maxine Peake, Le Trio Joubran, Noura Erakat, Joshua Virasami, Amer Zahr, William Shoki, Kevin Courtney and more.

The PSC Virtual Lobby of Parliament 2020 took place on December 2, with hundreds of people meeting with their MPs over Zoom to voice their opposition to Israel's annexation plans which are in violation of international law, its illegal settlements and its apartheid policies. Representatives were asked to take action through a trade ban, sanctions and the signing of EDM 1140 'Demolition of Palestinian homes' and EDM 1139 'Israeli annexation of Palestinian land'. As part of the event, UN Special Rapporteur Professor Michael Lynk released a video which was sent to all MPs, calling on states and the international community to hold Israel to account for its violations of international law.



# CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

READ ABOUT HIGHLIGHTS FROM SOME OF OUR CORE CAMPAIGNS OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS!

## LGPS DIVEST

Scheme members, their representative trade unions, and PSC members are continuing to pressure their Local Government Pension Fund to divest from companies complicit in Israel's war crimes.

In East Sussex, the council was flooded with letters from scheme members demanding divestment from companies appearing on the UN Human Rights Office's list of business enterprises active in Israel's illegal settlements.

In Hackney, a petition has been started demanding that the fund divest from companies that operate in Israel's illegal settlements, as well as from arms company Elbit Systems. In Northamptonshire, two activists presented to the pension committee demanding answers on the fund's unethical investments.

While in Merseyside, activists have continued to take the pension committee to task for their complicit investments, including their holding in Elbit Systems, who supply Israel with weapons and equipment used against the Palestinian civilian population.

To find out more about the campaign and to get involved, visit: [www.lgpsdivest.org](http://www.lgpsdivest.org)

49

local government pension funds have known direct complicit investments

£3,582,374,282

known complicit investment for all funds

## PUMA

We won't stop campaigning until Puma ends its support for football teams in Israel's illegal settlements. In spite of mounting global pressure, sportswear manufacturer Puma continues to lend its brand to supporting Israeli apartheid. This is why we're joining partners around the world in coordinating a day of action on Saturday 12th December. Our message is clear – Boycott Puma.

Every Israeli settlement is a war crime. Puma says it supports equality, but is helping to prolong the brutal dispossession of indigenous Palestinians by sustaining and legitimising these land grabs and the de facto annexation of territory.

Over 200 Palestinian football teams have called on Puma to drop their sponsorship of the Israel Football Association. Here in the UK we're amplifying their voice. Thousands of you have written to UK football clubs with Puma contracts, and we've heard directly that Puma are feeling the pressure.

Keep up the good work and join us in taking action on Saturday 12th December!



## STUDENT WORK

Students from across the UK took action on November 25th as part of the #ApartheidOffCampus day of action to demand that their institutions end their complicity in Israel's violations of international law by divesting from complicit companies. PSC research previously identified that UK universities collectively invest £450million in companies that aid Israel's breaches of Palestinian human rights.



This includes companies that supply the Israeli military with weapons and military technology used against the Palestinian civilian population, and business enterprises listed by the United Nations Human Rights Office as active in Israel's illegal settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Kicking off the day, London students projected messages on universities across London, demanding they #DivestForPalestine! Later, students from Warwick, UCL, Cambridge, Durham, Edinburgh and Leicester took over PSCs social media, recording short videos explaining why they are demanding their institutions end their complicity.

To support the students taking action, over 2,000 of you wrote to the Office for Students, as the departmental body representing the interests of students, demanding they urgently address students concerns around investments in companies complicit in human rights abuses.

## STOP ARMING ISRAEL

In September we teamed up with Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Campaign Against Arms Trade to support the local coalition in Liverpool opposing the Electronic Warfare Europe arms fair, which was due to take place in a council-owned venue in October. The fair would have seen companies such as Elbit Systems, Israel's largest private arms manufacturer, come to the city to sell their deadly weapons.

Following public pressure, the event was cancelled. While the cancellation was welcome, we continued to pressure Liverpool City Council for a commitment to ensure that no arms fair would take place again in the city in the future.

On September 21st, following 40,000 emails from citizens, co-ordinated by PSC, and a video from renowned comedian Alexei Sayle, the Mayor of Liverpool Joe Anderson promised to develop an ethical policy that will prevent future arms fairs in the city.

After being run out of Liverpool, the Electronic Warfare Europe has announced it will hold its next fair in Seville in 2021. Activists are already organising to get it cancelled there!



# 2021 AGM

In light of the unpredictability of the spread of coronavirus, the government response, and after feedback from branches, the decision was made to take PSC's AGM online for 2021.

The EC requested that a working group be set up to create a plan and report back, and participation was opened out to our membership. The working group that came together comprises branch members, branch chairs, EC members and PSC office staff, as well as Kamel Hawwash as the PSC Chair and Ben Jamal as Director. All who expressed an interest were included – with members from Manchester, West Midlands, Merton, Richmond & Kingston, and Tower Hamlets.

A core principle we've adopted is to make the most of the unique opportunities that an online format opens up, rather than attempting to simply replicate the physical AGM. For example, we are grasping the opportunity to have much greater participation of our membership, including members who might otherwise be unable or reluctant to travel from all parts of the UK to a single location.

The plan is not yet finalised. However, we are currently considering using the time building up to the event to communicate reports as well as plans through video and live in branch forums to allow greater opportunities for our members to engage, reflect and contribute. Voting for elections and motions will make use of electronic platforms. And we're actively looking at bringing Palestinian cultural perspectives to the day to ensure it is both a fulfilling and effective event.

**SATURDAY**  
**24th APRIL**  
**2021**

There will be discussion of the plan within upcoming branch forums in order to take feedback, as well as to prepare our movement for this different format. We strongly encourage participation within the branch forums, and would strongly encourage all members to sign up to the event and make it the largest attended AGM in the PSC's history.

# COVID-19 ROUND-UP

PSC has been producing a fortnightly Coronavirus Bulletin to keep people up-to-date on the virus situation in Palestine since the beginning of the outbreak. Current conditions are reaching a critical point, with cases doubling in the OPT and tripling in the Gaza Strip. Please see our latest bulletin below and take action by urging the UK to use its diplomatic power to put end to Israel's blockade on Gaza, which is having catastrophic effects on the spread and fatality of coronavirus within the besieged strip. [Write to your MP today.](#)



## Key Updates

- 98,850 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and 822 deaths
- 78,204 confirmed cases in the West Bank, including 13,203 in East Jerusalem
- 20,646 confirmed cases in Gaza, including 102 deaths
- There has been an unprecedented surge in the virus, with active cases doubling in the oPt and tripling in Gaza
- Although the health sector in the oPt is currently coping with the rise in people requiring treatment for the disease, WHO warns of an increasing risk of the system becoming overwhelmed soon

## Further Info

- [WHO situation report](#)
- [OCHA situation report](#)
- [MAP situation update](#)
- [Abbas extends pandemic state of emergency.](#)
- [COVID-19 has deepened the 'pandemic of poverty' for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon](#)
- [Palestine may resort to total lockdown](#)
- [Episode 5 of Mondoweiss' 5-part series on Covid-19 in Palestine: Creativity Under Coronavirus](#)



# WINTER FUNDRAISER



All we want for Christmas is a free Palestine.

But we know that wishing for it is not enough... We need to fight for it. Will you join us?

A small donation can go a long way this festive season. We have accomplished so much this year, but we can do much more.

Please chip in what you can, and help us campaign for free Palestine.

[DONATE NOW](#)



## PSC ONLINE SHOP

Buy Keffiyahs, t-shirts, accessories and more Palestine-related products (including our brand new tote bags) on our online shop! All money raised goes towards funding our crucial campaigns for Palestinian rights.

Shop now: [shop.palestinecampaign.org](https://shop.palestinecampaign.org)