US Campaign to End the Occupation Conference Program

End the Occupation

<http://www.endtheoccupation.org/article.php?id=4100>

Conference Program

All events take place at Town and Country Convention Center (500 Hotel Circle North, San Diego, CA 92108). [Click here](http://www.towncountry.com/d/towncountry/media/PDF/Accommodations/ResortPropertyMap.pdf) for a map. The conference location is on the east side of the resort, and the closest parking structure is north of it. Parking is available for $4 per day if you are a hotel guest and $8 per day for others.

See below for which panels are going to be livestreamed.

**Friday, September 19**

6:30pm Registration

7:30pm-9:30pm   
**Confronting Challenges to Palestine Activism**

Our opening panel will highlight the challenges facing advocates for Palestinian rights, including legal challenges to boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaigns and attempts at silencing critique of Israel. Over the past few months, there have been attempts to pass anti-BDS legislation both at the state level and in Congress, an increased number of attacks against BDS advocates by pro-Israel groups, and a number of cases of Palestinian scholars and activists facing repression, such as the U.S. government’s persecution of Rasmea Odeh and University of Illinois’ firing of Steven Salaita. The panelists will reflect on these challenges to Palestine activism and how those working for Palestinian rights can fight back. **This panel discussion is free and open to the public (Regency Ballroom).**

Speakers:

* **Rabab Abdulhadi**, Senior Scholar of the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Initiative, San Francisco State University
* **Marjorie Cohn**, former president of the National Lawyers Guild
* **Curtis Marez**, president of American Studies Association
* Moderator: **Rahim Kurwa**, Students for Justice in Palestine- UCLA

**Saturday, September 20**

8:00am Registration and Breakfast Provided

9:00am-11:00am **Opening Session**

This session will include time for attendees to network with others around BDS campaigns, efforts to change U.S. policy, and other opportunities to work for Palestinian rights.

11:15am-1:00pm  
**Mainstreaming BDS & Connecting Struggles**

Earlier this year, the Israeli company Elbit Systems won a $145 million U.S. Department of Homeland Security contract to provide surveillance technology along the U.S.-Mexico border, just the latest example of the militarization of immigration “reform” that has included the deportation of more than 2 million people under President Obama. Elbit produces the drones used by Israel and provides “intrusion detection systems” for the Apartheid Wall. G4S, the private British security company that helps Israel run prisons where Palestinian political prisoners are held and many times tortured, is notorious for operating private prisons where people are abused and providing deportation services worldwide. The killing of Mike Brown in Ferguson, MO has highlighted the epidemic of police brutality and militarization against African-American communities in the United States and the similar tactics used to justify such violence, including the dehumanization of victims and corporate media distortions of reality. It has also been noted that a member of the St. Louis County Police Department that killed Brown had trained in Israel in the past. This panel will highlight opportunities for joint struggle and the importance of connecting our work for Palestinian rights with other movements for justice.

Speakers:

* **Amal Ali**, former president of UC-Riverside Students for Justice in Palestine
* **Kristian Davis Bailey**, journalist and former president of Stanford Students for Justice in Palestine
* **Suhad Khatib**, Saint Louis Palestine Solidarity Committee
* **Gabriel Schivone**, youth organizer with UNIDOS indigenous-based ethnic studies group in Tucson, AZ
* Moderator: **Shirien Damra**, US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation

Lunch Provided

2:00pm-3:30pm **Workshops**

* **Carrying Out Effective BDS Actions**Andrew Kadi, Adalah-NY: The New York Campaign for the Boycott of Israel   
    
  Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaigns are not just about winning or losing- but also about the process that shifts the conversation to complicity in specific rights abuses and Israel’s system of occupation and apartheid on the ground. What are the elements of an effective campaign (research, successful partnerships, publicity/media)? How can you carry out effective BDS actions in your community? How do you mobilize your supporters and break out to those beyond the choir? These and other questions will be addressed.
* **The Costs and Profits of the Israeli Military Industry**   
  Elisha Baskin, American Friends Service Committee- National   
    
  The workshop will present and discuss the findings of a research about the human, economic, and social costs of the Israeli occupation and the role of the Israeli military industries. It will also explain how U.S. military aid to Israel works and how it impacts Israeli society, the exports of Israeli military industries, and who profits from them.
* **Exposing the 1% & State of Israel’s Agenda to Silence Criticism of Israel & Promote Anti-Muslim and Anti-Arab Racism: Organizing Against Backlash in ways that Strengthen Our Movement, Broaden Joint Struggle and Weaken Our Opposition.**  
  Sara Kershnar, International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network; Max Geller, Northeastern Students for Justice in Palestine; Jaime Veve, Labor Organizer   
    
  This workshop will provide an overview of the nationally coordinated and well-resourced attempt by pro-Israel supporters and the State of Israel to censor and manage dissent against Israel and to counter solidarity with the Palestinian grassroots struggle. The panelists will offer specific examples of how students, faculty, and activists that express dissent or actively support the Palestinian struggle are targeted both on and off campus. The panel will conclude with a discussion of the implications of the organizations and donors behind the backlash network for broadening our BDS campaigns and organizing for the liberation of Palestine and larger social justice movements.
* **Students for Justice in Palestine- West Session**

3:45pm-5:15pm **Workshops**

* **"Israeli Military Detention: No Way to Treat a Child" A Campaign Model for Local Advocacy on Palestinian human rights**  
  Jennifer Bing, American Friends Service Committee; Lynn Pollack, Jewish Voice for Peace- Chicago; Brad Parker- Defence for Children International Palestine  
    
  Looking for a campaign that can provide opportunities for cross-issue organizing? That can raise the issue of Palestinian human rights with elected officials and child rights advocates? Join activists from Chicago as they present their new campaign on Israeli detention of children, including resources for local activism in the United States on the critical issue.
* **Resisting the New McCarthyism on Campus: Know Your Rights and Understanding Trends in Repression of Palestine Organizing**  
  Liz Jackson, Palestine Legal Support; Omar Zahzah, UCLA Students for Justice in Palestine; Gabriel Levine, UCLA Jewish Voice for Peace   
    
  As activism on campus heats up and colleges react to pressure to punish speech critical of Israeli policies, Students for Justice in Palestine chapters have faced suspension, condemnation, forced removal of banners, exorbitant security fees to host events, accusations of anti-Semitism, ties to terrorism, and more. This workshop will discuss the many ways that Palestinian rights activism on U.S. campuses is simultaneously thriving and under attack, with case studies from UCLA and San Diego State. We will focus on overcoming the repression with Know Your Rights Training and strategies for cross-movement resistance.
* **David vs. Goliath - The Art of Asymmetric Advocacy on Capitol Hill**  
  Mike Coogan, US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation   
    
  Learn how underfunded but well organized activits are effectively challenging the opposition on Capitol Hill- and winning. This workshop will look at a number of recent case studies, including one in which a diverse group of organizations stalled the passage of AIPAC’s top legislative priority for the last 18 months and successfully altered key parts of the legislation. We will also discuss the US Campaign’s legislative priorities in the coming months and ways to get involved in upcoming campaigns.
* **"Tears of Gaza"** **Screening**  
  Disturbing, powerful, and emotionally devastating, Tears of Gaza is less a conventional documentary than a record–presented with minimal gloss – of the 2008-2009 bombing of Gaza by the Israeli military. Photographed by several Palestinian cameramen both during and after the offensive, this powerful film by director Vibeke Løkkeberg focuses on the impact of the attacks on the civilian population. [Watch trailer here](http://tearsofgazamovie.com/).

5:30pm-6:00pm **Steering Committee Elections**

US Campaign member groups will have the opportunity to hear from SC candidates.

**Break for Dinner**

7:30pm-10:30pm  
**The Battle for Justice in Palestine**

The evening will feature performances from Syrian-American hip hop artist **Omar Offendum** and Palestinian poet **Dina Omar**. The keynote address will be delivered by **Ali Abunimah**, co-founder of The Electronic Intifada. **Tariq and Suha Abu Khdeir** will also be speaking. Tariq’s beating by Israeli police while visiting family in Jerusalem made headlines back in July. **This event is free and open to the public (Regency Ballroom).**

**Sunday, September 21**

8:00am Breakfast Provided

9:15am-10:45am **Workshops**

* **Block-the-Boat: A West Coast Response to the Call for BDS and to Stop the Attack on Gaza**Reem Assil, Arab Resource and Organizing Center; Ahlam Muhtaseb, Al-Awda San Diego; Garrick Ruiz, BDS-LA; Sara Kershnar, International Jewish Anti-ZIonist Network  
    
  Initiated by the Arab Resource and Organizing Center in San Francisco, Block-the-Boat inspired port actions to stop the Israeli Zim ships from unloading across the West Coast, the U.S., and internationally. With support from the rank and file of the ILWU Local 10 in Oakland, we held off and then prevented the unloading of a Zim ship for four days. In LA we held back the ship for hours, and in Tacoma, we prevented the boat from unloading for three days. Workshop presenters will share the organizing that took place and lessons learned for strategies moving forward. The workshop will cover the central theme of how port shut-downs can be used as part of a longer strategy to expand the movement for BDS by building with different communities. The workshop will end with a call for others to join the Block-the-Boat coalition.
* **Breaking Down Barriers and Blazing New Trails in Church-Based Advocacy and Education on Palestine-Israel**Rev Diane Dulin, Kairos USA and United Church of Christ Palestine Israel Network; Theresa Basile, United Methodist Kairos Response; and Bob Ross, Chair of Advocacy, Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (USA)  
    
  Divesting from the Israeli occupation, lobbying Congress for major changes in U.S. policy, expanding Palestine-Israel 101 education throughout our denominations, and more! Join us to discover the key elements behind recent successes in church activism and ambitious new plans for expansion of church outreach as we continue to answer the call to action from Palestinian Christians.
* **Reframing the Conflict: A New Narrative for a Just Peace**Ken Boas, Dick Platkin, and Jeff Warner, Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions- USA  
    
  If the Israeli narrative prevails, a just and viable peace will remain impossible. The workshop will discuss the reframing of this narrative and will become the basis of ICAHD-USA’s upcoming education/advocacy campaign. Key re-conceptualizations for ICAHD-USA’s work include focusing on how with U.S. support, Israel is the strong party in the conflict; the occupation as a pro-active policy; only a win-win scenario will secure a just and lasting peace; the Israeli people do not support the settlements nor seek a Greater Israel; the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is an emblematic one with global impact.
* **How to Use Billboards and Advertising to Educate and Motivate**  
  Alison Weir and Katy Escobar, If Americans Knew  
    
  This workshop explores using billboards and newspaper ads as methods of information transmission intended to reach the general American public, challenge them to question their assumptions, and motivate them to take actin or learn more. The workshop will discuss billboard placement, how to tailor messaging based on the audience, and follow up actions to take to get a greater response.

11:00am-11:45am **US Campaign Annual Report**

Staff and Steering Committee members will present and answer questions about the US Campaign's work over the last year.

11:45am-1:30pm **The Continuing Struggle for Palestinian Rights**

Panelists will share their thoughts about moving forward following this year that has brought both so many important BDS wins but also yet another Israeli war on Gaza.

Speakers:

* **Reem Assil**, Arab Resource & Organizing Center
* **Hind Awwad**, former coordinator with the Palestinian BDS National Committee
* **Robin D.G. Kelley**, serves on the Advisory Board of the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel
* **Christian Ramirez**, Human Rights Director at Alliance San Diego
* Moderator: **Dina Omar**, founding member of National Students for Justice in Palestine

1:30pm   
**Closing and Steering Committee Elections Results**

- See more at: http://www.endtheoccupation.org/article.php?id=4100#sthash.3RLKcE4w.dpuf