## BDS Movement

https://bdsmovement.net/news/un-year-solidarity-palestinian-people-begins-boycott-success

# UN year of solidarity with the Palestinian people begins with boycott success

January 21, 2014 / **By** [Palestinian BDS National Committee](https://bdsmovement.net/news-listing-author/Palestinian%20BDS%20National%20Committee)  /

In November of last year, the UN General Assembly designated 2014 as the UN International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian people.

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In early January, high profile Norwegian singer Moddi [announced](http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/moddi-cancels-tel-aviv-gig-after-appeal-gaza) that he was cancelling his performance in Tel Aviv out of respect for the Palestinian call for a cultural boycott of Israel and following appeals from activists in Gaza.

On January 8, campaigners in the US were celebrating after [Veolia lost out on a $4.5 billion contract in Boston](http://mondoweiss.net/2014/01/massachusetts-commuter-contract.html) following a vigorous campaign denouncing the company’s provision of infrastructure to illegal Israeli settlements.

In a potentially precedent-setting move, Dutch pension fund PGGM [announced](http://www.bdsmovement.net/2014/dutch-pension-giant-divests-from-5-israeli-banks-11594) on January 13 that it is divesting from 5 of Israel’s biggest banks due to their deep involvement in Israeli violations of international law. The fund manages the pensions of 2.5 million people. [Media reports](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/93c1c0f2-7f7e-11e3-94d2-00144feabdc0.html#ixzz2qvlenIsX) now suggest that other European banks are considering similar steps.

On January 17, Villar Focchiardo became the sixth local council in Italy to [condemn](http://www.bdsmovement.net/2014/another-italian-council-condemns-pizzarotti-over-a1-train-11662) Pizzarotti for its role in an Israeli railway that passes through occupied Palestinian territory

The start to 2014 has also brought further evidence of the impact of BDS. [Israeli politicians have again spoken of their growing fears](https://bdsmovement.net/news/electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/boycott-greatest-threat-facing-israel-leaders-say) about the growth of BDS, with Justice Minister Tzipi Livni describing BDS as advancing “exponentially”. Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley have [complained](http://www.bdsmovement.net/2014/jordan-valley-settlements-hit-by-boycott-campaign-11583) that retailers in western Europe are increasingly unwilling to purchase their products, hurting profitability, and the BDS movement has been [featured heavily](https://bdsmovement.net/news/972mag.com/boycott-goes-prime-time-in-israel/85974/) in mainstream Israeli media outlets in recent days.

These significant developments so early in the year follow a 2013 during which the BDS movement stepped further into the political mainstream and saw major institutions join the boycott, as our round-up of 2013 successes and developments in the BDS movement shows. Some of the most important successes of 2013 included:

-  Security company [G4S faced mounting international criticism](http://www.bdsmovement.net/activecamps/g4s) and lost contracts worth millions of dollars with public bodies in South Africa and across Europe due to its role providing services to Israel’s checkpoints and settlements and prisons where Palestinian political prisoners are held without trial and tortured.

- French multinational Veolia lost contracts worth millions of dollars across the US, UK and in France, and [announced](http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/adri-nieuwhof/veolia-feeling-pressure-launches-attack-israel-boycott-movement) that it was pulling out completely of running bus lines for Israeli settlers in occupied Palestinian territory. Veolia still operates the illegal Jerusalem Light Rail project.

- World renowned physicist [Stephen Hawking](http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=2200) and academic unions and associations across Europe and the US endorsed the academic boycott of Israeli institutions.

- Scores of trade unions, church organisations and student associations across the world endorsed the Palestinian call for BDS and joined our increasingly powerful and effective movement.

- Banks and pension funds in Europe and the US divested from companies that profilt from Israeli apartheid including Veolia and SodaStream.

- The [European Union](http://www.bdsmovement.net/2013/eu-must-not-bow-to-us-pressure-to-disregard-human-rights-11315) and the [Dutch](http://www.bdsmovement.net/2013/dutch-government-urges-local-firm-cancel-east-jerusalem-project-11299), [British](http://www.bdsmovement.net/2013/uk-government-warns-business-links-settlements-11475) and [Romanian](http://www.bdsmovement.net/2013/romania-stops-sending-construction-workers-israel-settlements-11491) government adopted some of the long overdue measures which are required from states in order to avoid complicity in Israel’s colonization of  occupied Palestinian land, including measures aimed at stopping the flow of EU funds, foreign labour and business to the illegal Israeli settlement enterprise.

While there remains a long road before us, the Palestinian BDS National Committee is immensely proud of the way in which the BDS movement developed in 2013.

On behalf of our [member organisations](http://www.bdsmovement.net/bnc), we thank the each and every one of the campaigners and organisations whose dedication and skilled and strategic campaigning led to the inspirational continued growth of the BDS movement during 2013.

This year will mark 10 years since the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel’s apartheid wall and colonial settlements are illegal and that countries around the world are legally obliged to hold Israel accountable and not to support Israeli violations of international law.

Most international governments are yet to comply with this ruling and remain active accomplices to Israel’s system of occupation, colonisation and apartheid.  Yet the international grassroots BDS movement is proving increasingly capable of ending international complicity with Israeli apartheid and pushing governments, corporations and institutions to take action.

We look forward to working with campaigners and civil society organisations across the world to continue to develop the BDS movement as a vital tool in the struggle for freedom, justice and equality of the oppressed Palestinian people, including the exiled refugees, Palestinian citizens of Israel and those under Israel’s occupation.