

Palestinian Appeal to the Indian People and its Government:

Stop Arms Trade with Apartheid Israel

We, the Palestinian people, are grateful that we have been able to count on the support of the Indian people and its Government since the beginning of our struggle for freedom, self-determination and refugee repatriation.

For this reason, we are gravely concerned with India's relationship with Israel. The Indian government, which continues to reiterate its commitment to a just solution of the Palestine question in accordance with international law, has unfortunately emerged as a major backer of Israel's arms industry. It is important to realize that this is tantamount to financing Israel's continued, illegal occupation of Palestinian and Arab territory as it helps subsidise the occupation regime. The launch of the Israeli spy satellite while the Occupation was carrying out an inhumane and vicious siege on Gaza appears to us as being sadly symbolic of this new relationship.

By supporting the Palestine cause and the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, India helped the non-aligned movement to fight against colonialism. Its principled position rightfully earned for India trust all over West Asia. Today, we see India moving away from its anti-colonial positions, effectively supporting Israeli apartheid. This harms not only our struggle for true self-determination but also India's image and therefore interests in this region.

Today Palestine is in more dire need of global support than ever before. The Israeli Occupation aims to bring the Zionist project to its final stage, the complete ethnic cleansing of Palestine. While Gaza is the most horrific example of Israeli criminal disregard for basic Palestinian rights, the West Bank is slowly being cut into ghettos through the Apartheid Wall and checkpoints while being subject to regular military incursions. Extreme closure has been imposed on 79 villages on the western edge of the West Bank. The inhabitants of these villages are subject to conditions so severe that their villages are being rapidly depopulated. Palestinians within the Green Line are facing displacement and discrimination in all spheres of life. These policies of apartheid and colonial oppression have been ongoing since 1948, when more than 750,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes and Zionist gangs destroyed 531 Palestinian villages.

Meanwhile, the steadily warming Indo-Israeli relations over the last 15 years have been decisive in saving the Israeli Political-Military-Industry complex from a deep recession. This has contributed to the ongoing oppression of our people. In the last five years, India purchased arms worth nearly \$5 billion from Israel and has been its largest client

for military hardware. India, with a record 1.6 billion dollars procurement of arms, had boosted Israel's arms industries to all-time record sales of 4.4 billion dollars in 2006. The Occupation's arms trade with India has been one of the main reasons for Israel's emergence as one of the top five exporters of military equipment in the world. India is now aiming to purchase Israeli Arrow-II anti-ballistic missile defence system and is talking of further military cooperation and arms deals.

India's arms trade strategically contributes to the perpetuation of Israel's occupation and apartheid system.

We know that principled support for the Palestinian cause among the Indian people is still unswerving.

We thus call on the people and Government of India to:

- Join the Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) issued in July 2005, and to ensure the isolation of apartheid Israel until:
 1. The end of Israeli occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and the dismantling of the Wall;
 2. The fundamental rights and full equality of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel are recognized; and
 3. The right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194 is implemented.
- Stop all arms trade and military cooperation with Israel.
- Condemn the brutal collective punishment imposed on Gaza in grave violation of international law

We also urge all Indian political parties, trade unions, mass movements and other organizations to support BDS against Israel and to pressure the Indian Government to return to its earlier, time-honored policy on Palestine and use its position in the world to press for a just settlement of the Palestine question in accordance with international law.

Signed by:

Acting Steering Committee – BDS

- *Palestinian grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign*
- *PNGO (Palestinian NGO Network)*
- *PACBI (Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott Initiative)*
- *OPGAI (Occupied Palestine and Golan Heights Initiative)*
- *Ittijah (Network of Palestinian Community based organizations in Israel)*

Palestinian National and Islamic Forces