

# Cornell University Student Assembly

Originally Presented on:	3/27/2019
Type of Action:	Sense of the Body
Status/Result:	New Business

## S.A. Resolution #36

### Resolution Urging Cornell to Divest from Companies Profiting from the Occupation of Palestine and Human Rights Violation

ABSTRACT: This resolution calls upon Cornell University to divest from companies profiting from the human rights violations in the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

**Sponsored by:** Max Greenberg, '22, Mahfuza Shovik '19

**Whereas,** Cornell University strives as part of its mission to "enhance the lives of its students, the people of New York, and others around the world,"

**Whereas,** Cornell's Standards of Ethical Conduct call for the university to "conduct, process, and report all financial transactions with integrity",

**Whereas,** all students have the responsibility, as tuition-paying members of Cornell University, and the right, as members of the shared governance model, to critically review and examine the ethics of the University's financial investments,

**Whereas,** Cornell students have a legacy of advocating for justice, including in campaigns for divestment from apartheid South Africa and unsustainable fossil fuels,

**Whereas,** we affirm the crucial role of students and scholars in finding and advocating for solutions to humanity's various crises, and all manifestations of oppression and racism, including anti-Semitism, as well as to state actions like occupation,

**Whereas,** Students for Justice in Palestine and the Student Assembly would denounce all forms of anti-Semitism, including all forms of targeted attacks on individuals based on identity,

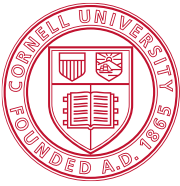
**Whereas,** SJP is open to calling out all forms of oppression and marginalisation from both non-Muslim and Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Israel,

**Whereas,** SJP has recently launched a campaign calling on the university to divest its funds from any companies actively involved in human rights violations in the Israeli occupation of Palestine,

**Whereas,** any attack directed at Israelis, Palestinians, or any other civilians is unacceptable,

**Whereas,** no country has a right to commit human rights violations, war crimes, or violations of international law,

**Whereas,** the occupied and blockaded Palestinian territories are controlled militarily by the Israeli



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42 government, as upheld by the UN in Resolution 242<sup>1</sup>,

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44 **Whereas**, the occupation entails violations of the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian  
45 people, including but not limited to rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human  
46 Rights<sup>2</sup>,

47

48 **Whereas**, the Israeli government is engaged in the ongoing building of settlements in the occupied  
49 Palestinian territories, which violates the clause of the Fourth Geneva Convention stipulating  
50 that the Occupying Power shall not “transfer parts of its own civilian population into the  
51 territory it occupies,” upheld by the UN Security Council in Resolutions 237<sup>3</sup>, 252<sup>4</sup>, 298<sup>5</sup>, and  
52 446<sup>6</sup>,

53

54 **Whereas**, the separation wall, which the Israeli government is building in the West Bank, has been  
55 declared “contrary to international law” by the International Court of Justice<sup>7</sup>,

56

57 **Whereas**, UN General Assembly affirmed that “all measures undertaken by Israel to exploit the  
58 human and natural resources of the occupied Arab territories are illegal” in Resolution 3175<sup>8</sup>,

59

60 **Whereas**, the UN General Assembly further affirmed “the Principle of the sovereignty of the  
61 population of the occupied territories over their national wealth and resources,” and  
62 furthermore called “upon all States, international organizations and specialized agencies not  
63 to recognize or cooperate with, or assist in any manner in, any measures undertaken by the  
64 occupying Power to exploit the resources of the occupied territories or to effect any changes  
65 in the demographic composition or geographic character or institutional structure of those  
66 territories” in Resolution 3005<sup>9</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, Security Council, resolution 242 - S/RES/242(1967) (22 November 1967), available from [undocs.org/S/RES/242\(1967\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/242(1967))

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, resolution 217A - Universal Declaration of Human Rights - A/RES/217(III) (10 December 1948), available from [undocs.org/A/RES/217\(III\)](https://undocs.org/A/RES/217(III))

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, Security Council, resolution 237 - S/RES/237(1967) (14 June 1967), available from [undocs.org/S/RES/237\(1967\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/237(1967))

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, Security Council, resolution 252 - S/RES/252(1968) (21 May 1968), available from [undocs.org/S/RES/252\(1968\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/252(1968))

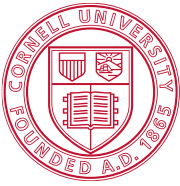
<sup>5</sup> United Nations, Security Council, resolution 298 - S/RES/298(1971) (25 September 1971), available from [undocs.org/S/RES/298\(1971\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/298(1971))

<sup>6</sup> United Nations, Security Council, resolution 446 - S/RES/446(1979) (22 March 1979), available from [undocs.org/S/RES/446\(1979\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/446(1979))

<sup>7</sup> International Court of Justice, advisory opinion on ‘Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory’ (9 July 2004), available from [icj-cij.org/files/case-related/131/1677.pdf](https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/131/1677.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, resolution 3175 - A/RES/3175(XXVIII) (17 December 1973), available from [undocs.org/A/RES/3175\(XXVIII\)](https://undocs.org/A/RES/3175(XXVIII))

<sup>9</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, resolution 3005 - A/RES/3005(XXVII) (15 December 1972), available from [undocs.org/A/RES/3005\(XXVII\)](https://undocs.org/A/RES/3005(XXVII))



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68 **Whereas**, in Operation Cast Lead (in the 2008 Gaza War) Israel killed 759 Palestinian  
69 non-combatants, including 108 women and 313 children, and Hamas killed in total of 13,  
70 which comprised of 3 non-combatants and 10 soldiers<sup>10</sup>,

71  
72 **Whereas**, in the 2018 peaceful and nonviolent protests staged in Gaza called the Great March of  
73 Return 183 non-combatant protesters were killed by Israeli military forces, and 10,000 other  
74 Palestinians were injured, including 1,849 children, 424 women, 115 paramedics and 115  
75 journalists<sup>11</sup>,

76  
77 **Whereas**, Cornell students enjoy peace of mind knowing that their university is barred by federal  
78 law from making investments that aid Palestinian militant organizations which engage in  
79 attacks that threaten the human rights of Israeli students and their families,

80  
81 **Whereas**, Cornell students are not able to enjoy the same peace of mind with respect to investments  
82 that threaten the human rights of Palestinian students and their families as our university  
83 profits from the human rights abuses committed against these students and their families in  
84 the course of Israel's illegal occupation,

85  
86 **Whereas**, certain companies have promoted and been complicit in many of the ongoing human  
87 rights violations systematically committed by the Israeli government, which have been  
88 documented by human rights organizations including Amnesty International, Human Rights  
89 Watch, Defence for Children International, B'tselem, Adalah, Physicians for Human Rights,  
90 and the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions,

91  
92 **Whereas**, Cornell University holds portfolio and direct investments in corporations that profit from  
93 Israel's military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, thereby making Cornell  
94 complicit in human rights abuses and violations of international law,

95  
96 **Whereas**, Cornell University does not currently take a neutral position on the occupation of the  
97 Palestinian Territories,

98  
99 **Whereas**, Cornell is also directly complicit in the occupation through Cornell Tech's partnership  
100 with Technion Israel Institute of Technology, which performs research and development for  
101 military technologies used by the Israeli Defense Forces<sup>12</sup>,

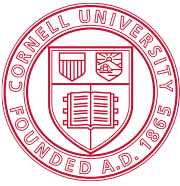
102  
103 **Whereas**, Technion has partnerships with Israeli arms companies such as Elbit and Rafael, which  
104 provide surveillance equipment for the separation wall and cameras and drones to the IDF

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<sup>10</sup> The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Fatalities during Operation Cast Lead, available from [btsalem.org/statistics/fatalities/during-cast-lead/by-date-of-event](http://btsalem.org/statistics/fatalities/during-cast-lead/by-date-of-event)

<sup>11</sup> Amnesty International, Six Months On; Gaza's Great March of Return (19 October 2018), available from [amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2018/10/gaza-great-march-of-return/](http://amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2018/10/gaza-great-march-of-return/)

<sup>12</sup> Hudson, Adam. "Cornell NYC Tech's Alarming Ties to the Israeli Occupation." The Nation. (1 March 2013), available from [thenation.com/article/cornell-nyc-techs-alarming-ties-israeli-occupation/](http://thenation.com/article/cornell-nyc-techs-alarming-ties-israeli-occupation/)



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105            respectively<sup>12</sup>,

106

107 **Whereas**, Technion has created unmanned bulldozers for the IDF used to demolish over 27,000  
108            Palestinian homes and properties since 1967<sup>12</sup>,

109

110 **Whereas**, SJP and the Student Assembly would be opposed to any investment in either Hamas,  
111            any occupying power, or any other organization that violates international laws,

112

113 **Whereas**, the following illustrative and non-exhaustive list of corporations, in which Cornell  
114            invests, profits from Israel's military occupation and participates actively in these abuses  
115            and violations,

116

117 **Whereas**,

- 118        1. Tata Motors produces specialized armored vehicles for the Israeli army, designed for urban  
119            combat, which Israel uses to defend its illegal settlements, to prevent Palestinian shepherds  
120            from herding their land, and to suppress Palestinian demonstrations<sup>13</sup>,
- 121        2. Ingersoll-Rand creates and produces the technology used at Israeli checkpoints across the  
122            occupied Palestinian territories<sup>13</sup>,
- 123        3. Raytheon supplies Israel with missiles that are used against crowded residential areas such as  
124            refugee camps, and for targeted assassinations<sup>14</sup>,
- 125        4. G4S provides security systems for Israeli prisons, detention centers, and interrogation  
126            facilities that specialize in holding Palestinian political prisoners, security services for various  
127            businesses in illegal Israeli settlements, and technology for Israeli checkpoints in the  
128            occupied Palestinian Territories, and provides deportation services to a range of  
129            governments, using techniques that fail to meet minimal standards of human rights<sup>14</sup>,
- 130        5. Hewlett Packard maintains a development center in Beitar Illit, an illegal Israeli settlement,  
131            provides services and technologies for two of the largest illegal Israeli settlements in the  
132            West Bank, Modi'in Illit and Ariel, and supplies computer technology for Israeli ministry of  
133            defense<sup>15</sup>,

134

135 **Whereas**, this resolution is not intended to be an attack on any identity— especially Jewish  
136            identity— but rather meant as an acknowledgment of marginalized students' concerns  
137            on campus regarding Cornell University's investment in unethical corporate practices  
138            abroad,

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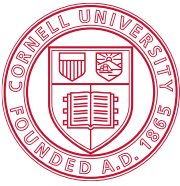
140 **Whereas**, the concerns presented in this resolution have been shared broadly and consistently by

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<sup>13</sup> Schlinder, Max "Indian Billionaire Ratan Tata to Attend Israeli Auto-Tech Conference" available from [jpost.com/Business-and-Innovation/Indian-billionaire-Ratan-Tata-to-attend-Israeli-auto-tech-conference-506971?fbclid=IwAR2LsHgBx3qZ60GPJkA8PuZxYcP7UMMlmFTrw4vvxZy8WePJ0DvdqGs4Iqc](http://jpost.com/Business-and-Innovation/Indian-billionaire-Ratan-Tata-to-attend-Israeli-auto-tech-conference-506971?fbclid=IwAR2LsHgBx3qZ60GPJkA8PuZxYcP7UMMlmFTrw4vvxZy8WePJ0DvdqGs4Iqc)

<sup>14</sup> Companies Sustaining the Israeli Occupation--AFSC, available from [quakerpi.org/QAction/Companies%20Sustaining-QPI2.htm](http://quakerpi.org/QAction/Companies%20Sustaining-QPI2.htm)

<sup>15</sup> Occupations, available from [investigate.afsc.org/issue-companies/5](http://investigate.afsc.org/issue-companies/5)



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141 the campus community as evidenced by the **22 student organizations, including all 5**  
142 **ALANA umbrella organizations representing the viewpoints of most major cultural**  
143 **groups on campus**, that endorsed the campaign put out by SJP calling for Cornell to divest  
144 its endowment pool from companies complicit in the illegal occupation of Palestine,  
145

146 **Whereas**, Palestinian students, members of Cornell Students for Justice in Palestine, and their allies  
147 often risk their safety and face intimidation for raising concerns presented in this resolution,  
148 including requests to be silenced in classrooms and potential compromises to post-  
149 graduation and future career prospects,  
150

151 **Whereas**, the student governments of more than thirty universities across the US, including peer  
152 institutions such as Stanford University, University of California at Berkeley, Northwestern  
153 University, University of Chicago, and New York University have passed resolutions to  
154 divest from companies that profit from the occupation of Palestine by Israel and its illegal  
155 settlements and the help those settlements provide in in the illegal Israeli occupation of the  
156 Palestinian territories,  
157

158 **Be it therefore resolved**, that Cornell University will further examine its assets for investments in  
159 companies that a) provide military support or weaponry for the occupation of the Palestinian  
160 territories or b) facilitate the building or maintenance of the illegal separation wall or the  
161 demolition of Palestinian homes, or c) facilitate the building, maintenance, or economic  
162 development of illegal Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian territory,  
163

164 **Be it further resolved**, that Cornell University will make information about all of its assets  
165 public, pertaining especially to its investments,  
166

167 **Be it finally resolved**, that Cornell University will end its complicity with the Israeli  
168 occupation of the Palestinian territories and divest its holdings from the aforementioned  
169 companies and any other companies that profit directly from Israeli military occupation in  
170 the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Moreover, Cornell University will not make further  
171 investments in companies that materially support or profit from Israel's occupation of the  
172 Palestinian territories.  
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174 **Respectfully Submitted,**

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176 Max Greenberg, '22

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178 Mahfuza Shovik '19  
179 *College of Engineering Representative*

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182 *(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 3-1-1, 3/26/19)*