

Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Agenda of the Thursday, April 11, 2019 Meeting
4:45pm-7:00pm in Memorial Room, Willard Straight Hall

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

II. Approval of the Minutes

- a. March 14, 2019 Minutes

III. Open Microphone

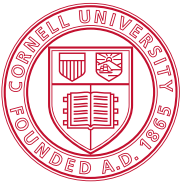
IV. Announcements and Reports

V. Business of the Day

- a. Resolution 36: Resolution Urging Cornell to Divest from Companies Profiting from the Occupation of Palestine and Human Rights Violation

VI. Convocation Speaker Announcements at 6:30

VII. Adjournment



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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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government, as upheld by the UN in Resolution 242¹,

Whereas, the occupation entails violations of the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people, including but not limited to rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights²,

Whereas, the Israeli government is engaged in the ongoing building of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, which violates the clause of the Fourth Geneva Convention stipulating that the Occupying Power shall not “transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies,” upheld by the UN Security Council in Resolutions 237³, 252⁴, 298⁵, and 446⁶,

Whereas, the separation wall, which the Israeli government is building in the West Bank, has been declared “contrary to international law” by the International Court of Justice⁷,

Whereas, UN General Assembly affirmed that “all measures undertaken by Israel to exploit the human and natural resources of the occupied Arab territories are illegal” in Resolution 3175⁸,

Whereas, the UN General Assembly further affirmed “the Principle of the sovereignty of the population of the occupied territories over their national wealth and resources,” and furthermore called “upon all States, international organizations and specialized agencies not to recognize or cooperate with, or assist in any manner in, any measures undertaken by the occupying Power to exploit the resources of the occupied territories or to effect any changes in the demographic composition or geographic character or institutional structure of those territories” in Resolution 3005⁹,

¹ 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))

² 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))

³ 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))

⁴ 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))

⁵ 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))

⁶ 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))

⁷ 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

⁸ 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))

⁹ 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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Whereas, in Operation Cast Lead (in the 2008 Gaza War) Israel killed 759 Palestinian non-combatants, including 108 women and 313 children, and Hamas killed in total of 13, which comprised of 3 non-combatants and 10 soldiers¹⁰,

Whereas, in the 2018 peaceful and nonviolent protests staged in Gaza called the Great March of Return 183 non-combatant protesters were killed by Israeli military forces, and 10,000 other Palestinians were injured, including 1,849 children, 424 women, 115 paramedics and 115 journalists¹¹,

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

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

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

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

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

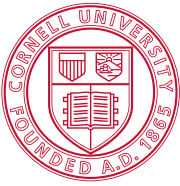
Whereas, Cornell is also directly complicit in the occupation through Cornell Tech's partnership with Technion Israel Institute of Technology, which performs research and development for military technologies used by the Israeli Defense Forces¹²,

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

¹⁰ 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

¹¹ 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/

¹² 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/



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respectively¹²,

Whereas, Technion has created unmanned bulldozers for the IDF used to demolish over 27,000 Palestinian homes and properties since 1967¹²,

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

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

Whereas,

1. Tata Motors produces specialized armored vehicles for the Israeli army, designed for urban combat, which Israel uses to defend its illegal settlements, to prevent Palestinian shepherds from herding their land, and to suppress Palestinian demonstrations¹³,
2. Ingersoll-Rand creates and produces the technology used at Israeli checkpoints across the occupied Palestinian territories¹³,
3. Raytheon supplies Israel with missiles that are used against crowded residential areas such as refugee camps, and for targeted assassinations¹⁴,
4. G4S provides security systems for Israeli prisons, detention centers, and interrogation facilities that specialize in holding Palestinian political prisoners, security services for various businesses in illegal Israeli settlements, and technology for Israeli checkpoints in the occupied Palestinian Territories, and provides deportation services to a range of governments, using techniques that fail to meet minimal standards of human rights¹⁴,
5. Hewlett Packard maintains a development center in Beitar Illit, an illegal Israeli settlement, provides services and technologies for two of the largest illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, Modi'in Illit and Ariel, and supplies computer technology for Israeli ministry of defense¹⁵,

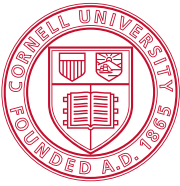
Whereas, this resolution is not intended to be an attack on any identity— especially Jewish identity— but rather meant as an acknowledgment of marginalized students' concerns on campus regarding Cornell University's investment in unethical corporate practices abroad,

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

¹³ 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

¹⁴ Companies Sustaining the Israeli Occupation--AFSC, available from quakerpi.org/QAction/Companies%20Sustaining-QPI2.htm

¹⁵ Occupations, available from investigate.afsc.org/issue-companies/5



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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Max Greenberg, '22

Mahfuza Shovik '19

College of Engineering Representative

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