

BDS Movement: Boris Johnson's BDS Ban Recalls Margaret Thatcher's Support of Apartheid South Africa

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The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement hit back at UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's plans to ban public authorities from participating in the international movement boycotting Israeli goods.

"Boris Johnson's government, like the anti-Palestinian Trump administration, is more than ever directly engaged in Israel's desperate war of repression on advocacy for Palestinian rights and on BDS in particular," the BDS movement said in a statement on Wednesday.

The group likened Johnson's move, which was announced earlier this week, to former PM Margaret Thatcher's decision in 1988 to ban local British councils from boycotts and divestment against apartheid South Africa.

"It was wrong then, and it's wrong now," BDS said.

Boris Johnson is helping Israel wage a desperate war of repression on Palestinian rights and [#BDS](#).

Supporters of freedom of expression, human rights and international law should oppose the UK government's efforts to repress our peaceful movement for freedom, justice & equality. pic.twitter.com/2Sx8YmlzzD

— BDS movement (@BDSmovement) [December 18, 2019](#)

"Supporters of freedom of expression, human rights and international law should oppose the UK government's efforts to repress our peaceful movement for freedom, justice & equality," the statement concluded.

Johnson's promise to ban the BDS movement was featured in his conservative party's manifesto, where the movement was described as "undermining community cohesion."

He is expected to officially announce the proposal on Thursday during the ceremonial launch of his agenda.

Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues Lord Eric Pickles posted a video to the Conservative Friends of Israel lobby group's Twitter feed, accusing the movement of being a "thin disguise for anti-Semitism."

VIDEO: [@EricPickles](#) welcomes [@BorisJohnson](#) plan to outlaw public body boycotts of Israel.

"If we're being really honest, BDS is just a thing disguise for antisemitism. We as [@Conservatives](#) should always tackle racial discrimination" pic.twitter.com/hpLyCum0vc

— CFol (@CFol) [December 16, 2019](#)

"We're going to ensure that public sector, places like councils and health authorities, can't work against Israel, can't prejudice Israel," he continued, adding that BDS is "one of the worst, wink wink, nudge nudge, piece of racialism that we know."

Advocates of Palestinian rights expressed their concerns over Johnson's move, which would further the false narrative that criticisms of Israel were equal to antisemitism.

Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) tweeted their solidarity and support for local organizations in the UK working to promote the BDS movement, and called Johnson's plan "frightening" and "anti-democratic."

Frightening anti-democratic measures afoot in the U.K. Solidarity with our friends [@PSCupdates](#) [@BrightonBDS](#) and others working for freedom and justice for Palestinians [#bds](#) yes <https://t.co/d7PiETU3xO>

— Jewish Voice for Peace (@jvplive) [December 17, 2019](#)

Johnson, who has described himself as a "passionate Zionist" was elected to the role of Prime Minister last week, following a heated campaign against Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

A large part of the campaign was characterized by the discourse on Israel and Palestine, specifically the BDS movement, and the labelling of Corbyn as an "anti-Semite" for his support of Palestinian rights.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed his delight at Johnson's "astonishing victory."

Congratulations to my friend [@BorisJohnson](#) on your astonishing victory. This is more evidence that the people decide, not the media. It's part of a global tidal wave for secure borders, a free economy and sovereignty.

— Benjamin Netanyahu (@netanyahu) [December 13, 2019](#)

"I look forward Boris to working with you in the coming years to strengthening even further

the important friendship between Israel and the UK. Congratulations my friend," Netanyahu tweeted.

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