

Teachers Union of Ireland Votes Unanimously for Academic Boycott of Israel

By [Global Research News](#)

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[Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign](#)

Region: [Europe, Middle East & North Africa](#)

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At its Annual Congress on Thursday 4th April 2013, the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) became the first academic union in Europe to endorse the Palestinian call for an academic boycott of Israel. The motion, which refers to Israel as an "apartheid state", calls for "all members to cease all cultural and academic collaboration with Israel, including the exchange of scientists, students and academic personalities, as well as all cooperation in research programmes" was passed by a unanimous vote during today's morning session.

The motion further calls on the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to "step up its campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against the apartheid state of Israel until it lifts its illegal siege of Gaza and its illegal occupation of the West Bank, and agrees to abide by International law and all UN Resolutions against it", and on the TUI to conduct an awareness campaign amongst members on the need for BDS. The motion was a composite motion proposed by the TUI Executive Committee and TUI Dublin Colleges Branch. It was presented by Jim Roche, a lecturer in the DIT School of Architecture and member of the TUI Dublin Colleges Union branch, and seconded by Gerry Quinn, Vice President of the TUI.

Speaking after the successful passage of the motion, Jim Roche said: "I am very pleased that this motion was passed with such support by TUI members, especially coming the day after Israeli occupation forces shot and killed two Palestinian teenagers in the West Bank yesterday. BDS is a noble non-violent method of resisting Israeli militarism, occupation and apartheid, and there is no question that Israel is implementing apartheid policies against the Palestinians. Indeed, many veterans of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa have said that it's worse than what was experienced there."

Mr. Roche pointed to the desperate situation of Palestinian education under occupation saying that: "Palestinians are struggling for the right to education under extremely difficult conditions. They are eager for it, as shown by the large numbers of students in third level education inside and outside the occupied Palestinian territories. Education has always been a target of the Israeli occupation, seeing forced closures of universities, disruption under checkpoint, closure and curfew regimes, and arrests, beatings and killing of both students and teachers. Sometimes, such as during the 2008-09 attack on Gaza, educational institutions have been militarily attacked. In fact I have just returned from a solidarity visit to Gaza where I had the opportunity to hear first-hand from Palestinian educators and students about their difficulties. The unanimous passage of this motion that shows that the Palestinian struggle for freedom, of which academic freedom is a key part, resonates with TUI members and sends a strong message of solidarity to their counterparts in Palestine"

Mr. Roche concluded: “We proposed this motion as we believe that, as with South Africa, the trade union movement has a vital role to play in helping apply pressure to end Israeli apartheid and occupation. I am proud that the TUI has taken a clear stand, and now support a full academic boycott of Israel in line with the Palestinian call for BDS”.

Dr. David Landy, a member of the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign and founder member of Academics for Palestine welcomed the motion saying: “This is an historic precedent, being the first such motion in Europe to explicitly call for an academic boycott of Israel. We congratulate the TUI and call on all Irish, British and European academic unions to move similar motions. Undoubtedly apologists for Israeli apartheid will complain that such motions stifle academic freedom, but this is nonsense. The Palestinian call for an academic boycott of Israel is an institutional boycott, not a boycott of individuals. Ironically, those that will jump to complain about this motion will have no words of condemnation for the de facto boycott imposed on Palestinian education by Israel, nor for its continuing attacks on Palestinian education, students and educators”.

Notes

The TUI Motion in full reads:

241. Executive Committee/Dublin Colleges(x4)

TUI demand that ICTU step up its campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against the apartheid state of Israel until it lifts its illegal siege of Gaza and its illegal occupation of the West Bank, and agrees to abide by International law and all UN Resolutions against it.

Congress instructs the Executive Committee to:

- (a) Conduct an awareness campaign amongst TUI members on the need for BDS
- (b) Request all members to cease all cultural and academic collaboration with Israel, including the exchange of scientists, students and academic personalities, as well as all cooperation in research programmes. (ENDS)

The Palestinian Call for a Cultural and Academic Boycott of Israel [can be read here](#):

Jim Roche is a lecturer in DIT School of Architecture and a member of the TUI Dublin Colleges Branch He is also PRO of the Irish Anti-War Movement and a member of both the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Gaza Action Ireland.

David Landy is a lecturer in the TCD Department of Sociology, a member of the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign national committee and a founder member of Academics for Palestine

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