

“Human Rights Sanctions”: The World’s Blatant Double Standard, in Israel’s Favor

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The American Studies Association may be singling out Israel for boycott, but if you look at the serious, painful punishments the world metes out to oppressor nations, Israel is not being singled out, it's being let off the hook.

As of Friday at noon, a Google search of “human rights sanctions” turns up over 40 million results. There are human rights sanctions and other punishments against:

[China](#), [Russia](#), [Iran](#), [Syria](#), [Zimbabwe](#), [Sudan](#), [Yemen](#), [Belarus](#), [Cuba](#), [North Korea](#) and lots of other countries.

And these sanctions weren’t put in place by some minor academic group like the American Studies Association, but by the United States of America, the European Union and/or the United Nations Security Council. Furthermore, these sanctions hurt those countries quite a bit more than the ASA’s boycott of Israeli colleges is likely to hurt Israel.

Yet you would think from the [reaction](#) to the recent [ASA boycott](#) that no other country in the world is being punished for its human rights violations. Everybody’s jumping on [ASA president Curtis Marez’s quote](#) on why the organization was going after Israel instead of other, far worse malefactors: “One has to start somewhere,” he told *The New York Times*. But while the ASA may be starting with Israel, the powers-that-be in the world have gone after any number of human-rights violating countries – yet still haven’t gotten to Israel and its 46-year military dictatorship over the Palestinians.

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Would [Israel’s defenders](#) like to see the world treat this country like it treats Iran – by “bringing it to its knees” with “[crippling sanctions](#),” not to mention the clamor from some quarters to bomb its nuclear facilities?

Or would they like Israel to be treated like Syria – by freezing its foreign assets and denying entry to any Israeli involved in the occupation? Would they want the U.S. to arm some of the groups fighting Israel? Would they have preferred Israel being one step away from getting bombed by the U.S.? Would they rather that the world powers destroy Israel’s chemical weapons – or would they choose the ASA boycott?

Or if not like Syria, would Israel’s advocates want this country to be treated like China – with the [U.S. vetoing its international loan applications](#) and the U.S. and EU imposing an [arms](#)

[embargo](#) on it? By the way, lots of countries are faced with arms embargoes by the U.S., EU and/or the UN, including Congo, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe. Israel, by contrast, gets \$3 billion worth of arms from America every year.

And how about Zimbabwe; would Alan Dershowitz have Israel trade the ASA boycott for Zimbabwe's punishments? Not only does the African nation face an embargo on arms, it's up against one on international loans, too. Its fearless leader Robert Mugabe has been made [radioactive](#) – anybody who has dealings with him stands to have his assets frozen and his entry barred to the U.S. and EU.

Even big, powerful Russia has it worse than Israel – [18 Russian officials](#) said to be involved in the prison killing of dissident lawyer Sergei Magnitzky in 2009 have had their assets frozen and their entry barred to the U.S., and there are constant calls for the EU to follow suit. How many Palestinians have been killed wrongfully by Israeli soldiers, police, Shin Bet agents and settlers during the occupation; are the U.S. and EU punishing any of them or their superiors for that?

And now, because of its anti-gay laws and statements and the gay-bashing climate they've encouraged, Russia is facing boycotts far more powerful than the one imposed by the ASA. Gay bars around the world are [boycotting Russian vodka](#). And the movement to boycott next month's Winter Olympics in Sochi is booming. Here's an irony: [Bibi Netanyahu](#) himself just agreed to join other world leaders, starting with Obama, in boycotting the Games. Do Obama, Cameron, Hollande and their colleagues boycott any Israeli showcase event because of the occupation, which is an incomparably worse crime than Russia's anti-gay laws and harassment?

The Western powers can punish Russia, they can punish China, they can lay in to Iran, Syria, North Korea, Zimbabwe, Sudan and the like – but they won't touch Israel (the European Union's wussy "[guidelines](#)" notwithstanding). Indeed, the strongest country in the world not only won't punish Israel for its near half-century of tyranny over the Palestinians, it keeps feeding it arms while shielding it in the UN. America coddles Israel, the world's last outpost of colonialism, like few countries have ever been coddled by a superpower in history.

The occupation is not, by any means, a human rights violation on the scale of Assad's butchery, or the Congo's, or Sudan's, or Zimbabwe's, for example. But it is a greater one than, for example, Iran's nuclear program, or Cuba's communism, or Russia's killing of Sergei Magnitzky and its anti-gay policy – yet Israel gets off scot-free. The world doesn't punish this country unfairly – it doesn't punish this country at all, while America rewards it lavishly.

The ASA boycott, like the rest of the BDS movement's achievements, are not examples of the world's double standard against Israel – they're Quixotic, rearguard actions against the world's blatant double standard in Israel's favor. If this country were treated with a minuscule fraction of the severity the West ordinarily visits on human rights violators, the occupation would have ended long ago.

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