

# Letter from 107 Organizations to 250 Universities Re: AAA Academic Boycott

May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023

*SENT VIA PERSONALIZED EMAILS*

Dear (University President Name),

We, the undersigned coalition of 107 education, civil rights and religious groups, are deeply concerned about the upcoming vote on an academic boycott of Israel resolution within the American Anthropological Association (AAA), which is among the largest scholarly and professional organizations in the country. Unlike the few disciplines that have misguidedly endorsed an academic boycott of Israel, anthropology is a core discipline of the academy, and its abandonment of scholarship for the promotion of politically motivated and directed activism will have rippling effects for years to come. The harmful impact of AAA's actions, were its membership to endorse the boycott, should not be underestimated. Furthermore, we understand that your university's Department of Anthropology is a fee-paying partner with AAA through the AAA's Department Services Program ([DSP](#)), and thus, we believe it is crucial to bring this matter to your attention and request your immediate action to protect the well-being of your students and faculty.

An academic boycott, unlike an economic boycott, seeks to suppress the open exchange of ideas, collaboration, and scholarly discourse. The AAA resolution, if passed, not only threatens the core principles of academic freedom, but also poses significant risks to the educational opportunities and experiences of your students and faculty, the reputation of your institution, and the inclusivity and diversity of your campus community. We therefore implore you to consider the following detrimental consequences of the boycott:

- **Irreversible impact on students and faculty:** An academic boycott would restrict the academic freedom and educational opportunities of your students and faculty by discouraging events and learning opportunities related to Israel, including study abroad programs and initiatives that promote peace and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. Moreover, engagement with Israeli scholars would be limited, reducing access to valuable insights and perspectives that contribute to a rich academic discourse, and consequently, stifling intellectual diversity and engendering insularity in grappling with complex global issues.

- **Inconsistent with academic values:** By supporting an academic boycott, the AAA would be contradicting the fundamental principles of academic freedom, the pursuit of knowledge, and the open exchange of ideas. It is crucial that universities and academic institutions remain committed to these core values and reject any measures that undermine them.
- **Reputational risks:** Continued association with the AAA, should they pass a discriminatory academic boycott of Israel, would tarnish the reputation of your institution. Numerous universities severed ties with the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), including most of the universities with prestigious federally-funded Middle East Studies programs, after MESA endorsed an academic boycott of Israel last year.
- **Rise in antisemitic activity:** Research has shown a clear correlation between academic boycotts and the incitement of anti-Jewish hostility and antisemitism. Endorsing an academic boycott would create an unwelcoming and unsafe environment for Jewish students and faculty on your campus, as well as those perceived as supporting Israel or opposing the boycott, and thus, undermine the values of inclusivity and diversity that higher education institutions should promote.

Given the gravity of these concerns, we strongly urge you to:

1. **Immediately and publicly condemn academic boycotts in general, and the AAA resolution specifically, and urge the AAA to reject the resolution.**
2. **Reaffirm your commitment to academic freedom and the well-being of your students and faculty by cutting all ties with the AAA, should the resolution pass.**
3. **Investigate and implement safeguards to ensure that an academic boycott can never be implemented at your university.**

As an institutional partner of AAA, you have a direct stake in ensuring that the AAA's actions do not harm your own students and faculty or erode the public's trust in your institution.

Thank you for your leadership and your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned 107 Organizations:

Academic Council for Israel  
 Academic Engagement Network  
 Alliance for Academic Freedom  
 Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity (AEPi)

Alums for Campus Fairness - National  
Alums for Campus Fairness - Tufts  
Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Davis  
Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Riverside  
Alums for Campus Fairness - UCLA  
Amariah  
AMCHA Initiative  
America Israel Cooperative Enterprise  
American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists  
American Council of Trustees and Alumni  
American Friends of Tel Aviv University  
American Jewish Congress  
American Russian-Speaking Jews Alliance  
American Society of the University of Haifa  
American Truth Project  
American Values  
Americans Against Antisemitism  
Americans Fighting Antisemitism  
Americans for Ben Gurion University  
Americans for Peace and Tolerance  
Atlanta Israel Coalition  
B'nai B'rith International  
Boston Israel Action Committee  
Bulldogs for Israel (Brooklyn College)  
CAFI - CUNY Alliance for Inclusion  
California Association of Scholars  
CAMERA Education Institute  
CAMERA on Campus  
Campus Anti-Semitism Task Force of the North Shore  
Chabad at Brooklyn College  
Christians and Jews United for Israel  
Club Z  
Coalition for Jewish Values  
Combat Anti-Semitism Movement  
Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA)  
Davis Faculty for Israel  
Education Without Indoctrination  
EndJewHatred  
Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)  
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)  
Fight Back Now  
Fuel for Truth  
Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors  
Harvard Hillel  
Hillel at Baruch, City, John Jay, Pace, SVA, Fordham, FIT & The New School  
Hillel of Silicon Valley

Hillels of the Florida Suncoast  
Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel  
Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism  
Iranian American Jewish Federation  
Iranian Jewish Women's Organization  
Israel in NYC  
Israel Matters  
Israel on Campus Coalition  
Israel Peace Initiative (IPI)  
Israeli-American Civic Action Network  
Israeli-American Civic Education Institute  
Israeli-American Council (IAC)  
Ithaca Area United Jewish Community  
Jerusalem Education Fund  
Jewish American Affairs Committee of Indiana  
Jewish Awareness Movement (JAM)  
Jewish Student Coalition of New York City (JSCNY)  
Jewish Studies Zionist Network  
Jewish War Veterans of the USA  
Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa (JIMENA)  
Latinx for Quality Education  
Legal Insurrection Foundation  
Michigan Jewish Action Council  
Middle East Forum  
Middle East Political and Information Network (MEPIN)  
MLA Members for Scholars' Rights  
National Association of Scholars  
National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel  
National Jewish Advocacy Center  
NH4Israel  
No Left Turn in Education  
North Carolina Coalition for Israel  
PeerK12  
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations  
Psychologists Against Antisemitism  
Rabbinical Alliance of America  
Rhode Island Coalition for Israel  
Russian Jewish Community Foundation  
Scholars for Peace in the Middle East  
Simon Wiesenthal Center  
StandWithUs  
StandWithUs Center for Combating Antisemitism  
StandWithUs Saidoff Legal Department  
Stop Anti-Semitism Now  
Stop BDS on Campus  
StopAntisemitism

Students and Faculty for Equality at CUNY (S.A.F.E. CUNY)  
Students and Parents Against Campus Anti-Semitism  
Students Supporting Israel National  
Swarthmore Alumni Against Antisemitism on Campus  
The Deborah Project  
The Lawfare Project  
William & Mary Hillel  
World Jewish Congress North America  
Young Israel of Bedford  
Zachor Legal Institute  
Zionist Organization of America