



# APARTHEID OFF CAMPUS

A STUDENT GUIDE TO BUILDING A DIVESTMENT CAMPAIGN

WELCOME TO THE  
PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY  
FOR PALESTINE



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# INTRODUCTION

Palestinians have been resisting settler colonialism for more than a century – from the disastrous Balfour declaration and the days of the British Mandate, through the devastation of the Nakba, to the genocide in Gaza that began in 2023. British complicity in Israel's institutionalised racism against the Palestinian people has continued throughout this time. **The British government enables, normalises and profits from Israeli apartheid through extensive arms & trade deals and diplomatic ties.**

In 2005, Palestinians called on people internationally to do more than just raise their voices in concern or offer charity. They called for material solidarity: for organised responses across the world to hold institutions, companies and governments to account for their role in enabling Israel to continue its occupation.

This international approach, using the tactics of boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS), was inspired by the movement that helped to bring down apartheid in South Africa. We know that Israel can only maintain its system of institutionalised racist discrimination – amounting to the crime of apartheid – its bombardment of Gaza, its military occupation, and its settler violence, because of the equipment and services it receives from a range of companies; and the impunity it receives internationally.

That's why students across the world are taking action, organising divestment campaigns to kick apartheid off their campuses. **This guide will help provide you with the key information you need to build a campaign calling on your university to end all ties to Israeli apartheid and genocide.**

# WHY DIVESTMENT?

By demanding that our universities **divest** from companies which are complicit in Israel's system of apartheid and genocide, we can force them to move their money away from these companies, stopping them profiting from human rights abuses.

Ultimately, the aim is to force these companies to end their ties to Israeli apartheid, leading to its economic isolation, and cutting the supply of resources used to maintain the occupation and oppress Palestinians. In the meantime, divestment also means that our universities' (and therefore our) money is not being used to support a genocidal state.

## CASE STUDY: Swansea divests!

In June 2024, Swansea University committed to divesting £5 million from Barclays bank, as part of ensuring all of its investments follow an ethical investment policy. PSC research in 2024 found that Barclays invests over £2 billion in, and provides financial services worth £6.1 billion to companies arming Israel. Barclays also has an agreement with Israel to act as a "primary dealer" for its government bonds, which means Barclays helps Israel directly to raise money to fund its crimes against Palestinians.

The commitment from the university came after a 28-day student encampment, which had divestment from Barclays as one of its core demands. Students set up camp in the main university squares, demanding that their university take their campaigns seriously.

# UNIVERSITY COMPLICITY

PSC research found that British universities collectively invest almost £460 million in companies complicit in Israel's system of apartheid, illegal occupation and genocide against the Palestinian people.

Some of these investments are direct, with the university directly holding money in a company. The majority of universities also invest in complicit companies indirectly, placing their money in funds – many of which claim to be 'responsible' or 'sustainable' and yet invest millions in companies like BAE Systems, Palantir, Albermarle Corporation, and Caterpillar.

Many student organisers have also undertaken research into their universities' complicit ties, including detailed information about current investments, and into non-financial ties such as academic or research partnerships and sponsorships.

DATABASE HERE:



## CASE STUDY: King's College Cambridge

On 20 May 2025 King's College, Cambridge announced that it would divest fully from arms companies and those complicit in illegal occupation by the end of the calendar year. It specifically referenced Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian land in the updated investment policy, which excluded companies that "are involved in activities generally recognised as illegal or contravening global norms, such as occupation".

This came after over a year of campaigning by students at the college and at the university as a whole, including an encampment and student occupations in 2024.



# HOW TO RUN A DIVESTMENT CAMPAIGN

All campaigns need to have a **strategy** – a thought through plan which you follow as a group. A strategy allows us to recognise where our levers of pressure are, what actions we can take and what tactics we can use to achieve our overall goal (in this case, divestment).

The four key steps in building a strategy are:

## 1. Research and pick a target

You can use PSC's University Complicity Database to get a quick overview of your university's investments. Many universities have investments in arms companies (e.g. BAE Systems), and also in other companies which are complicit (e.g. tech companies or companies like AirBnB which operate on stolen Palestinian land)

- You may choose to send your own FOIs (get in touch for a template) but remember that these can take months to receive back from the university, and universities often refuse to answer.
- You can find out a lot about your university's investments without an FOI – by searching their annual accounts and looking into what investment funds they invest in, and then looking into those funds' annual accounts.
- There might also be non-investment financial, research or other links that you can find out by speaking to other students and staff e.g. a faculty funded by a complicit company, or a partnership with an Israeli university, built in an illegal settlement on stolen Palestinian land. Make sure to check out the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) Guidelines on how to do this effectively, and remember, target institutions, not individuals.

JCDecaux

**GREAT BRITAIN** **ISRAEL**

UKRA DEFINITION  
RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS  
INVESTMENTS

**HOW WELL  
CONNECTED  
IS YOUR  
UNI?**

We're here to help more people love later life.

I would like to go back to my younger days. I go with the flow now.

Age UK  
Love later life



## 2. Make a plan

Bring your campaign team together and talk about what your overall goal is (e.g. divestment) and what escalating steps and actions will get you there. By mapping this out, you build a sustainable strategy that helps you achieve your goals.

### SPOTLIGHT: Power Mapping

A key tool in strategy planning is power mapping – this is a great tool to use as a group early on in your campaign (or at a key turning point in the campaign) to work out what tactics to use to effectively target the right people and areas to achieve change.

Power mapping involves placing key figures or groups of people in your institution along the axes of powerful/not powerful in achieving your goal (so in this case whether they have power over the decision to divest); and how supportive/not supportive they are of achieving that goal.



## POWERFUL

*You need to solidify the support of the powerful and supportive people - how can you bring them even more onside; how can you make use of their influence?*

*You need to think about tactics that will move the powerful but not supportive people into being more supportive - is there a way to put collective pressure on them, or make the cost too great for them to not support you?*

## NOT SUPPORTIVE

*You can ignore the people who are not supportive or powerful! E.g. a small Zionist group is not worth wasting energy engaging with - they won't impact whether or not you are successful.*

## SUPPORTIVE

*You need to raise the power of the people who are supportive but not powerful e.g. organise the mass student body; raise their collective understanding; bring more people on board in the campaign.*

## NOT POWERFUL

### 3. Build your campaign

You need to make sure you're bringing people with you and have a critical mass of support, so think about how you use **outreach**, **educate** and **train** new people

- To get new people involved, set up an open meeting where you talk about your goals and bring people into the organising of some upcoming actions. Remember to take clear notes of action points, and to have a strong facilitator to make sure the meeting stays on track! You can also contact PSC for a workshop.
- Make sure to give newcomers a task they can get involved in – the sooner people feel ownership over the actions you're taking, the sooner they will feel part of the campaign and will go on to become core organisers.
- Building trust between members of the group helps us work together, so make time to get to know each other. Socials are good! Make sure that your group is both inclusive internally and welcoming to new people externally. Reach out to groups with similar goals (e.g. Islamic societies/antiracist groups/feminist/other left wing/LGBT+/climate groups) to partner on campaigns and build coalitions.
- Understanding what people's skills and interests are is important, and a diversity of skills and experience will help the campaign. Is someone a graphic designer? Great at social media? A keen article-writer? Great photographer? Social butterfly? All of these are amazing assets to your group!
- Regular meetings are important to keep up momentum. Ensure these are structured, not too long, and link to past meetings/action points.

## 4. Choose your tactics

Now it's time to think about the tactics that you can use to influence those you have identified as holding power over key decisions. If you've identified that a particular committee could make decisions around divestment, what tactics could be used to target people on that committee? How can you make them pay attention to you?

Remember you should start small and build up your actions as you get more support – you don't have to do an occupation in your first term! Take a look at the tactics below – which ones will build the movement? Which will take you a step closer to your goals? Which will help people build confidence to take further action? Which leave you room for escalation?

Think about how each tactic **builds power** in your university: how does it engage new people, advance your goals and help you achieve wins!

*Flyposting*

*Disrupt an event*

*Stalls*

*Demonstration*

*Banner drop*

*Rally*

*Petition*

*Leafleting*

*SU motion*

*Physical blockade*

*Email/phone jam*

*Film screening*

*Occupation*





# SPOTLIGHT: Messaging

To reach people, and to build towards wins, your campaign needs a communications strategy which considers the best way of speaking to different audiences (including students, your SU, your university, the general public, other activist groups).

Key things to remember about messaging:

- It's important to be consistent and relevant. You should keep your main demand at the centre of your communications.
- Remember why you're doing this. We organise because we stand in solidarity with Palestinians who deserve freedom and justice, and we want to end our institutions' complicity in their oppression. Don't get distracted by refuting other points or arguing with bad-faith actors, and make sure you are always talking about Palestine.
- Palestinians are steadfast in their resistance to Israeli occupation, and we in Britain have a responsibility to uplift their right to make decisions about their own land and politics. Don't speak for/over them or make out that they are helpless.
- Avoid individualisation! Talk about how many students you've mobilised, and frame your activities around building mass student power, rather than how great one student is.
- Remember that everything you post publicly on social media will likely be read by the university.
- Messaging can be tactical - different messaging is needed for different audiences e.g. in a negotiation with the university you might need to be able to use different language than if you were addressing a rally, whilst keeping your demands clear. You might not want to publicly say things that are illegal or could put individuals at risk.

UAL SJP  
LIBERATED  
ZONE  
SOLIDARITY WITH  
PALESTINIAN STUDENTS



## CASE STUDY: Sussex University

In November 2025, Sussex University published their new ethical investment policy, which states that it will not invest in companies that are **“involved in, contribute to, profit from, or facilitate illegal activities including slavery, child labour, human rights violations, occupation, apartheid or genocide.”** This followed sustained campaigning from a range of student groups at the university.

Campaigning for your university to pass an **ethical investment policy**, or to update their existing ethical investment policy, is a great way to ensure that any divestment victories are long-lasting, because it sets them in university policy.

If you are working on an ethical investment policy, the key elements to include are explicit reference to apartheid and genocide – ideally with Israel’s treatment of Palestine as an example.

The UN has produced a list of companies which operate in Israel’s illegal settlements. This can be a useful piece of evidence, and can be referenced in university policy.



# NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNIVERSITY

Hopefully, once you have successfully built a strong base of student support and started taking action, your university will start to listen to your demands. They might even offer to enter into negotiations with you or representatives from your campaign. Here are 5 top tips for a successful negotiation:

## *1) Set your demands, and stick to them!*

Make sure your demands are specific, that you don't have too many (a shorter list is more achievable because it's more direct). Don't let anyone tell you that full divestment is impossible: universities could make ethical decisions about where they put their money if they wanted to.

## *2) Keep protesting*

Negotiations shouldn't be the only pressure you are putting on the university. Protests outside meetings, and loud, vibrant, ongoing campaign actions creates the pressure that will force the university into action.

## *3) Hold the university to their commitments*

Make sure you take minutes in any meetings, and go over action points with the university – and then hold them to those! They will always try and delay, so you need to push them into action.

# NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNIVERSITY

## 4) *Use your SU (if you can)*

Students' Unions will almost always have more access to the committees and key individuals within the university than other students. If they are able to bring supportive papers to committees, speak on your behalf in other meetings, find out information for you or even just keep an ear out for movement on your demands, then they can be a real benefit to your campaign. If you have passed a motion in support of divestment, then your SU sabbatical officers are mandated to support you in your work towards this goal.

## 5) *Celebrate your victories!*

Even small wins build towards larger victories, and help give campaigns momentum, keep people hopeful, and build engagement. They'll also encourage others to take similar action at different universities. Make sure you share your achievements, and send them to PSC so we can platform them!



# CASE STUDY: Manchester Met. University

In October 2024 Manchester Metropolitan University announced they had stopped banking with Barclays, moving the £3,950,000 they had held with the bank.

This followed student campaigning highlighting Barclays' complicity, and ongoing campaigns at Manchester Met. seeking to end all their university's complicit investments. This campaigning fitted in with the national 'Boycott Barclays' campaign, which calls for a boycott of all Barclays services until they end their investments and financial services to companies arming Israel.

Tying into a national campaign like this can give you a ready-made structure, goals and messaging. We can also send you materials like leaflets and stickers! Campaigning on Barclays is also a great opportunity to build coalitions with other groups, as it's a company that is often targeted by the climate movement for its investment in fossil fuel industries.



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TEMPLATE SU  
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BARCLAYS  
MOTION





APARTHEID  
← OFF  
CAMPUS

[www.palestinecampaign.org](http://www.palestinecampaign.org)



# RESISTING REPRESSION

Remember that repression is a tactic used to distract us from the importance of speaking about what's happening in Palestine, so don't let it stop you campaigning and talking about the rights of the Palestinian people.

Different actions will get different responses from the university – and sometimes a response is what you want! Use this guide to make sure you're prepared:



**Know your rights** – you have the right to protest. Universities have to respond in a 'proportionate' manner if they wish to restrict your protest.



**Decide on your goals** – what are you trying to achieve with this action? Do you have demands? Make sure everyone taking part knows these.



**Decide on your lines as a group** – you should explicitly stand against any form of hate speech, including homo/transphobia, misogyny, and all forms of racism. There may be other key community agreements you want in place as well.



**Defend yourself in advance** – get in touch with legal observers ahead of your action and print bustcards. This is especially important if you're off campus or involving people who are not university students. And if anything does go wrong, know how to contact the European Legal Support Centre (ELSC).

# RESISTING REPRESSION



**Don't speak to the press (or police) without preparation** – most press will not be friendly, and having an individual speak to the press increases the likelihood of them getting individually targeted. Instead, have a prepared press release (get in touch with PSC for support writing one) and a few key lines that you put out on the day that the press can then pick up from your social media.



**Take action!** The main way to push back at repression is to keep taking action, together.

Get in touch with the European Legal Support Centre (ELSC):



Download a bustcard from Green and Black Cross (GBC):



Liberty advice on protests at university:



# CASE STUDY: British military ties to Israel's genocide in Gaza

Britain has been deeply complicit in supporting Israel's genocide in Gaza since 2023: through arms sales, RAF reconnaissance flights over Gaza, from which it is suspected intelligence is shared with Israel, training of Israeli soldiers, and other forms of military cooperation.

Despite the government's decision on 2 September 2024 to suspend a small number of arms export licences to Israel, they continued to supply crucial components for Israel's 45 F-35 combat aircraft, just made sure that they were supplied indirectly via the US or other countries, rather than directly to Israel.

The estimated total value of UK F-35 component supplies to Israel between 2016 and 2025 is £572 million. This represents almost half the total value of UK arms sales to Israel in the time period.

Students joined PSC's protests at five key sites used for producing F-35 components in 2025, joining coaches to Sheffield, Rochester, Havant and Cheltenham. The protests called for an end to the production of the deadly F-35 fighter jets, and an end to all British arms trade with Israel.





**G** **z**  
Stop the massacre  
Stop the War Coalition [www.stopwar.org](http://www.stopwar.org)

NAKBA 77  
وقفوا الإبادة  
**END THE GENOCIDE**  
الجهاد  
**FREE PALESTINE**  
PSC

Palestine Solidarity Campaign  
**FREE PALESTINE OCCUPATION**

**STOP**

**PALESTINE IS STILL BEING KILLED**

# FINAL THINGS TO CONSIDER

## *How can you ensure continuity in your campaign?*

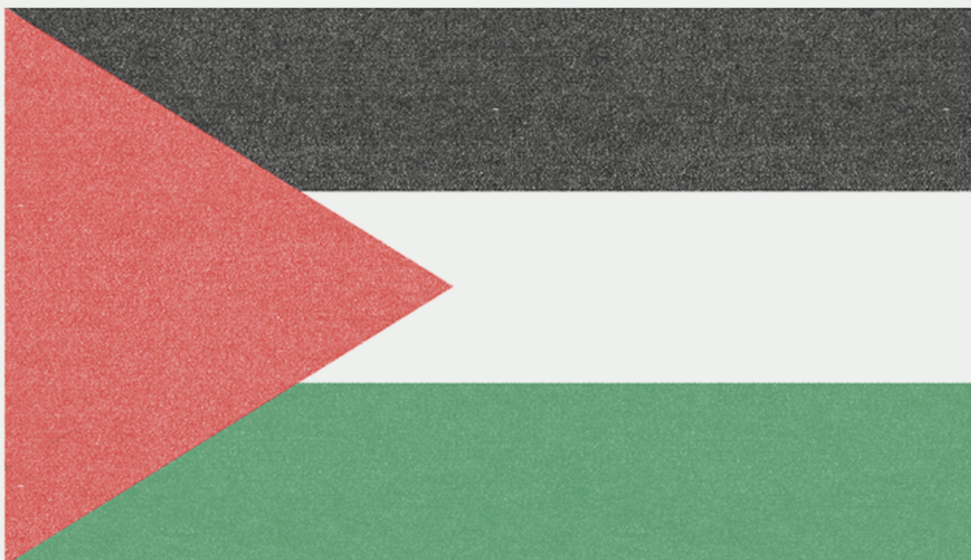
Remember that hardly any campaigns are fought and won in one year – they take time! This is why you need a strategy that you can use to map out a campaign over time. How can you involve new students every year and ensure they grow as organisers?

## *How can you platform Palestinian voices?*

Think about how you can educate others about the situation in Palestine through your campaigning. Palestinian organisations in this country including the British Palestinian Committee can often provide speakers for events; and organisations like Makan provide trainings on Palestinian history and resistance.

## *How can you link up with other groups?*

This could include staff unions, local PSC branches, other campaigning groups in your city, or other student groups. Remember – coalition building is a slow process, but we are far stronger together.







**Need more resources? Have any questions?**

Check out our website and get in touch:



[info@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:info@palestinecampaign.org)  
Instagram/Tiktok: [palestinesolidarityuk](#)  
Bluesky/X: [PSCUpdates](#)



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