



US PALESTINE SOLIDARITY: REVIVING ORIGINAL PATTERNS OF POLITICAL

By [Loubna Qutami](#)

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The past decade has seen major shifts in Palestinian and Palestine solidarity activism in the US. Many of these changes both inform and are caused by the explosion of awareness of the Palestinian struggle. However, Palestine's newfound popularity does not necessarily translate into more political power or better conditions for Palestinians.

The wins that Palestinians and Palestine solidarity activists have achieved have been grounded in the academic and cultural boycott of Israeli institutions. These efforts have largely been stimulated by the work of student divestment movements that have led student representatives to vote to withdraw university investments from companies profiting from the Israeli occupation.

It is a matter of debate whether these wins are the fruit of Palestinian collective labor in the US or of the growing US Palestine solidarity movement, or of both. The US Palestine solidarity movement is less of a movement and more of a loose network with little structural and political centrality. However, the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) principles have established a consistent reference for allies and are legitimized by international law.

Much of the success of Palestinians' and Palestine solidarity activists' work has relied on showing how varying dimensions of the struggle in Palestine symbolize oppression in global contexts—a “joint struggle” approach. This work re-grounds Palestine within the framework that was operative prior to Oslo, in which Zionist repression in the Occupied Palestinian Territory could be linked to forms of oppression impacting communities of color, indigenous and immigrant groups in the US, and Third World people globally.

It was not until 2013 that larger and more mainstream Palestine solidarity institutions [responded](#) to calls for a broader joint struggle framework and strategy.

Policy Recommendations

- Palestine solidarity organizers should get clear on what Zionism is and limit engagement in Zionist rhetoric, exceptionalism, and funding in the movement's collective organizing spaces. The movement's activists should also fully articulate how Zionism hurts communities beyond Palestinians. They would do well to deepen a focus on the role of [Israel in worldwide repression](#) in order to strengthen a global movement that is anti-Zionist.

- The Palestine solidarity movement and its allies stand to achieve wins by working on local campaigns for sanctions that link the oppression of Palestinians to the role that the Israeli arms trade and security training programs play in local US municipal politics and militarized policing systems.
- Palestinians and Palestine solidarity activists must articulate the relationship between Palestine and the War on Terror as well as the connection between the US racialization of affected communities and the Arab homeland.
- Re-kindling the bonds of Palestinian peoplehood must be a critical component of the strategies of all Palestinian organizations. At the same time, solidarity organizations should offer support, resources, skill-sharing, and more to Palestinian collectives as a contribution to the overall movement.