

# The Academic Boycott of Israel

## The Fight Against the Boycotting of Israeli Academia

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A Report Concerning  
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<https://www.neaman.org.il/project/scholar-shield/>

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# 1. Executive Summary

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The State of Israel, as a center of scientific and technological innovation, needs to preserve its financial, social, and national defense resilience by strengthening its academic and research infrastructure. Along its 77 years of existence, Israel has managed to turn existential challenges into groundbreaking opportunities, positioning itself as a global high-tech powerhouse.

Israeli academia has traditionally fulfilled a crucial role in generating the human and technological infrastructure that positioned Israel not only as a high-tech powerhouse but also as a developed country with advanced systems in a long line of sectors, including national defense, health, education, welfare, and more.

However, the events of October 7 2023 and the consequent war brought on a gradual change in global public opinion, exposing Israel to new threats including repeated attempts to impose an academic boycott on Israeli institutions and researchers. This report by the Samuel Neaman Institute examines the scope of the academic boycott of Israel, its diverse effects, and potential and effective means of addressing it.

## Main Findings

- **Israeli academia's global status:** Israeli academia enjoys a good reputation globally, and is ranked respectfully in leading international rankings like the Shanghai Ranking and the QS Ranking, which are based on scientific excellence and publications. Many Israeli universities collaborate with world research institutions, and almost all Israeli researchers maintain individual collaborations with their foreign counterparts, attesting to the global scientific community's trust in Israeli academic endeavors.
- **The BDS movement and the academic boycott:** the academic boycott movement (BDS) considers Israeli academia as a central target in its fight against Israel, which it seeks to replace with a different state by the name of Palestine, whose borders will stretch from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean. The movement, which began operating some 3 decades ago, has significantly increased its efforts since the events of October 7 2023. BDS activists employ anti-Israeli rhetoric, and often antisemitic rhetoric as well, and attempt to apply pressure on academic institutions and researchers around the world to refrain from collaborating with their Israeli counterparts, to cease investments in Israel, and more.
- **Impacts of BDS on Israeli academia:** while this study has found that academic BDS has yet to essentially impact the ability of Israeli institutions to sustain high-quality research and collaborate on a global level, there is concern of a process that will



eventually lead to significant adverse effects starting from the individual level and ending in impact on all academic institutions. Many researchers report refusals to publish articles, cancelled invitations to conferences, delays in promotion processes, and concern about damage to their academic reputation and relationship with foreign colleagues. There is also increasing difficulty in the ability of higher-education institutions in Israel to draw international students, and in the participation of researchers and students in conferences or training programs abroad.

- **BDS initiatives in global campuses:** pro-Palestinian organizations that operate in university campuses around the world, and especially in Europe and the US, are crucial in promoting the academic BDS. They conduct protests and demonstrations, call for the divestment and boycott of Israel, and also act to promote an anti-Israeli attitude among students and faculty.
- **Counteraction and activities against BDS:** many entities in Israel and abroad have reacted in various ways in contravention of BDS, including diplomatic, legal, and public efforts. Israeli academic institutions themselves take action to prevent BDS by creating new collaborations and strengthening existing relationships, and by increasing awareness to the adverse effects of BDS on the freedom of academic research and on international collaboration.
- **Explicit and implicit BDS:** almost half of all reported instances of academic BDS are implicit, making it harder to identify the phenomenon and find practical solutions. Many times, the implicit BDS is expressed by the boycotting entity refraining from explicitly stating the reason for refusing to collaborate, and trying to disguise its true motives.
- **Trends in scientific publications:** indicators like annual number of publications, rate of participation in scientific conferences, and level of international collaborations, indicate that as of 2024, there is no apparent significant decrease in Israel's scientific output. However, when examining the relative pace of increase in publications as compared to other comparable countries, a certain deceleration is evident. The decrease in the number of articles accepted for conferences and the continuing gap in international collaborations may reflect preliminary signs of the impacts of exclusionary policies, political screening, or institutional isolation. Such trends require methodical and multi-layered long-term monitoring, to differentiate incidental shifts from structural changes that stem from academic BDS.
- **Increasing awareness and BDS response:** an increase in public awareness to academic BDS, especially following the events of October 7, as well as advocacy efforts on behalf of Israel, have led more elements, including academics and various

associations, to organize in different ways to find effective solutions for addressing BDS issues.

## Main Recommendations for Decision Makers

- **Improving Israel's public advocacy array:** developing a comprehensive and effective advocacy strategy that operates on several levels and in several languages. It should focus on presenting Israeli academia's unique contribution to global research and science, and on emphasizing the importance of international collaboration between researchers and institutions.
- **Increasing collaborations:** increasing efforts by the government and academic entities to strengthen international collaborations, with an emphasis on creating new relationships with leading research institutes and universities around the world. It is recommended to focus on countries where BDS activity has not been significantly influential thus far.
- **Allocating resources for critical research infrastructures:** to prevent the adverse impacts of a future success in BDS efforts to block Israeli researchers from using critical research infrastructures abroad, it is recommended to prioritize several critical infrastructures, assess the chances of an adverse blockage scenario, and allocate reasonable resources for ensuring the continuousness of Israeli research in these fields.
- **Establishing a virtual "situation room":** setting up a center for monitoring and tracking academic BDS activities, to serve as a platform for exchanging information, providing advice for researchers, and helping in formulating solutions and activating various aid mechanism.
- **Recruiting global academic leadership to support Israeli academia:** encouraging globally renowned academic leaders to visit Israel, hold lectures, or conduct collaborations.
- **Cultivating academic ambassadors:** developing training program for Israeli researchers and students, so that they can respectfully represent Israeli academia on the world stage, communicate pro-Israeli messages, and form relationships with foreign colleagues.
- **Increasing involvement of associations and NGOs:** encouraging Jewish and non-Jewish organizations with a positive agenda towards Israel and the Jewish People to increase their activity for Israeli academia in global campuses, in collaboration with students and faculty.

- **Legal aid:** providing legal aid to Israeli academic institutions and to Israeli academics who were harmed by BDS.
- **Ongoing monitoring:** continuing to track developments in academic BDS, examine the effectiveness of various means taken, and adjust strategy to changing needs.
- The Samuel Neaman Institute is committed to maintaining the database that was constructed as part of the current project, making sure it is up-to-date, convenient to use, and accessible to all relevant decision makers. The institute will continue to develop tools to help Israeli institutions and academics address the BDS phenomenon, in ongoing collaboration with government entities, associations, and other organizations in Israel and abroad, that also fight the academic BDS efforts against Israel.

The project's website, presenting various data collected so far, data analysis, and tools that were already developed, is available at:

<https://www.neaman.org.il/project/scholar-shield/>

## Conclusion

The academic BDS of Israel is a significant arena of conflict, in addition to the military, political, economic, and legal arenas with which Israel has had to contend since October 7. It is a multidimensional challenge that requires a comprehensive and long-term response. This report portrays a detailed and data-based representation of the phenomenon, and provides practical and applicable recommendations for decision makers. However, to ensure Israel's scientific future we must continue to monitor developments, analyze findings, and constantly improve and update the tools and strategies used to address BDS.

## 2. Preface

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### 2.1 Global Status of Israeli Academia and Collaborations

Due to its unique geopolitical location and ongoing challenges, the State of Israel is required to establish its economic, social, and national defense resilience on robust foundations of scientific and technological innovation. Throughout its 77 years of existence, Israel has proven its ability to turn challenges into opportunities, while recording impressive achievements and positioning itself as a global high-tech powerhouse. Israel's ability to overcome complex economic and military crises over the past few decades illustrates not only the advantages of a knowledge-based economy, but also the critical importance of a national policy that supports scientific-technological creativity and the cultivation of high-quality human capital. This infrastructure has proven to be essential for Israel's resilience and prosperity.

Nonetheless, the current challenges, and specifically the events of October 7 2023 and the consequent war, present Israel with a complex new reality. Changes in global public opinion, influenced by BDS activity and by extreme anti-Israeli propaganda often combined with antisemitic rhetoric, along with attempts to boycott Israeli academic institutions and researchers, give rise to concerns about Israel's ability to maintain its leading status in the global scientific and technological arena.

These challenges emphasize the urgent need for a comprehensive national strategy that will ensure Israel can continue to grow as a global leader in technological development and innovation, while coping with the geopolitical and public-image obstacles it faces. Israel's ability to adapt to the changing reality and to continue promoting technological and scientific excellence will be crucial in preserving its economic, social, and national defense power in the near future.

Israel's higher education system is responsible for generating the human capital and knowledge that facilitate Israel's scientific-technological endeavors across all market sectors. Israeli higher education has undergone incredible development over the years, with the universities and campuses established before and after Israel's inception forming the basis for impressive scientific and technological advancement.

The first universities in Israel were founded before the state itself, with the Technion - Israel Institute of Technology opening its doors in 1924, the Hebrew University in 1925, and the Weizmann Institute of Science (then called the Daniel Sieff Institute) in 1934. After Israel's declaration of independence, other institutions were established - Bar Ilan University (1955), Tel Aviv University (1956), Haifa University (1963), and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (1969).

Israel currently has 10 universities, 29 academic colleges, and 22 colleges of education. In the last decade, Ariel College (2012) and the former IDC (2021; now Reichman University) were recognized as universities, and in May 2024 the Council for Higher Education approved the establishment of a steering committee for approving Tel-Hai Academic College as a university.

According to data by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), in 2022-2023 **345.3K students** studied for an academic degree (including 46.3K students who studied for a B.A. at the Open University). Out of some 300K students who studied for an academic degree in 2022-2023 in Israeli higher education institutions (excluding B.A. at the Open University): 72% studied for a bachelor's degree; 22% (65.5K) studied for a master's degree; and about 4% studied for a PhD.

Israeli academia's global status is examined using international rankings that compare higher education institutions. This chapter will now present academically-accepted rankings, which reflect the status of Israeli academia and the scope of its international collaborations.

## Shanghai Ranking / Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)

The Shanghai Ranking was first published in 2003 as an internal endeavor to compare China universities' research achievements with other universities. It is currently published once a year, and is considered one of the world's leading rankings. Originally conducted by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, since 2009 the ARWU has been published by the independent organization Shanghai Ranking Consultancy. The ranking compares between 1,800 higher education institutions around the world, with the leading 1,000 ranked and published each year<sup>1</sup>.

The ARWU focuses on data by leading scientists<sup>2</sup> (Noble Prize Laureates and Highly Cited Researchers<sup>3</sup>) and on scientific publications. Its six indicators include: number of alumni and faculty who have won a Noble Prize and other select awards in various fields of research (30%); number of Highly Cited Researchers (20%); number of articles published in Nature and Science (20%); number of articles included in the SCIE and SSCI databases (20%); academic performance per researcher, calculated by normalizing the first five indicators by the number of researchers in the university (10%).

The following table depicts the number of universities per country ranked by the ARWU among the one hundred leading universities in the years 2019-2024. The data shows that Israel

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.shanghairanking.com/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> The ranking was criticized for the high weight (30%) attributed to the Noble Prize and Fields Medals, even though winners represent only a limited section of the academic institution's activity. Another weakness identified is the disregard of faculties that are not awarded such prizes, like the humanities, law, and most social sciences.

<sup>3</sup> Highly Cited Researchers ([website](#))

made a considerable leap between 2020 and 2021 - tripling its number of universities ranked among the first one hundred from 1 to 3<sup>4</sup>. Since 2021, Israel has remained stable with three universities on this distinguished list (Weizmann Institute of Science, Hebrew University, Technion). Considering its size, the presence of 3 Israeli universities among the leading one hundred is a significant achievement. In this context, Israel is better positioned than other countries of equivalent size like Denmark (2), Belgium (2), and Singapore (2), and has equaled or surpassed larger countries such as the Netherlands (2) and Sweden (2). Regionally, until 2024 Israel was the only country in the Middle East to appear on the list. In 2024, one university in Saudi Arabia made it to the top one hundred.

Table 1: Number of universities ranked among the one hundred leading universities by country, 2019-2024

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>USA</b>	44	43	41	39	38	38
<b>China</b>	5	6	7	8	11	13
<b>UK</b>	8	8	8	8	8	8
<b>Australia</b>	7	6	7	7	6	5
<b>France</b>	4	6	5	4	5	6
<b>Switzerland</b>	5	5	5	4	5	5
<b>Canada</b>	4	4	4	5	5	3
<b>Germany</b>	4	4	4	4	4	4
<b>Netherlands</b>	4	4	3	4	4	2
<b>Sweden</b>	3	3	3	3	3	2
<b>Japan</b>	3	3	3	3	3	2
<b>Israel</b>	1	1	3	3	3	3
<b>Denmark</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Belgium</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2

<sup>4</sup> Note that the Shanghai Ranking methodology has undergone changes during this period

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Singapore</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Norway</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Finland</b>	1	1	1	1		1
<b>Hong Kong</b>				1	1	1
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>						1

## Publications and Collaborations

Israeli universities boast a relatively high rate of publications authored by both Israeli and foreign researchers. This rate varies among universities, and of course among different disciplines (e.g., it tends to be higher in engineering and exact sciences than in social sciences and the humanities). This high percentage stems, among other factors, from the fact that many faculty members in Israeli higher education institutions have done their doctoral or post-doctoral studies abroad. Almost all Israeli faculty members prefer to take their sabbaticals abroad, and a very high rate of them participate in one or several professional conferences abroad each year. These factors generate a widespread network of colleagues with which it is relatively easy for them to collaborate. This attests to the immense significance of international collaboration for the future of research in Israel. A scenario in which foreign researchers refuse to collaborate with Israelis will land a harsh blow to the volume and quality of research in Israel.

Each Israeli university has a considerable list of agreements signed with foreign universities and research institutions. In some cases these are long-term agreements spanning many years, in others they are predefined to terminate in a few short years, and in a few cases they are short-term agreements intended for a specific purpose. Israel's Start-Up Nation image has drawn many delegations from world universities to visit, seeking to uncover the "secret recipe" behind this phenomenon of Israeli innovation and entrepreneurship, and to ascertain the role of Israeli universities in creating this recipe. Many hundreds of international collaboration agreements were signed thanks to this phenomenon, yet in most cases the agreements were shelved and did not contribute to actual collaboration. Significant and stable collaborations are usually accompanied by supporting resources, which come from donations or from governmental or institutional support in the collaborating countries.



The Technion has set a new bar for collaborations by establishing branches abroad. The first is the result of a collaboration with Cornell University to establish a new university endeavor called Cornell Tech on New York City's Roosevelt Island in 2013. The second is a joint venture with Shantou University in China's Guangdong Province, launched in 2017. Each of these collaborations was allocated financial support amounting to more than \$100M in donations by US and Chinese philanthropists.

In the context of this report, it should be noted that attempts to sabotage the Technion's and Cornell University's joint initiative started immediately upon its inception. Early on, the initiative was temporarily housed in the Google building in New York City. Every Tuesday afternoon, a vigil of women (mostly Jewish) stood on the sidewalk in front of the Google building with signs protesting the collaboration, calling Cornell University to withdraw from the initiative.

## 2.2 Israeli Academia's Scientific and Technological Excellence

Academic research in Israel is characterized by significant achievements in relation to Israel's size. Such achievements encompass various fields including digital technology (artificial intelligence, cyber, quantum computing, etc.); life sciences (medications, medical equipment, synthetic biology, etc.); sustainability (renewable energy, agriculture, water technologies, etc.), generating a unique contribution to global progress, and to Israel's economic and social development.

Israel's academic institutions are consistently ranked at the top of global rankings, and are a home for wide-scale research activity that has a global impact. In addition to Israeli universities' high ranking in the aforementioned Shanghai Ranking, Israel is also ranked third in the world by the number of Turing Award winners for computer sciences<sup>5</sup>, with six winners in the years 1966-2023 (for comparison, the second-rated country by this ranking is the UK with 7 winners). The achievements of Israeli researchers emphasize their contributions to the promotion of human knowledge.

Israeli universities feature prominently in PitchBook's ranking of alumni startup founders. Tel Aviv University is ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the world in PitchBook's 2024 ranking – the only university outside of the US ranked in the top ten. Four other Israeli universities made it to the top 50 in this prestigious ranking: Technion in 16<sup>th</sup> place, Hebrew University ranked 30<sup>th</sup>, Reichman University ranked 42<sup>nd</sup>, and Ben Gurion University ranked 47<sup>th</sup>.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> ACM Turing Awards By Nation [[website](#)]

<sup>6</sup>Tel Aviv University ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the world in PitchBook's startup founders ranking. Tel Aviv University. September 2024 [[Source](#)] (Hebrew)

Israeli academic institutions manage to win competitive international research grants at a high rate in relation to country size. As part of the EU research and innovation program (Horizon 2020), Israel is one of the leading non-European countries to win grants<sup>7</sup> (ranked third<sup>8</sup> according to Participation Rank). Israel is ranked first according to Horizon 2020's <sup>8</sup>Seal of Excellence Rank – a badge of honor awarded to research proposals that achieved a particularly high score (usually beyond the funding threshold).

The European Research Council awards prestigious grants to exceptional researchers; From the inception of Horizon in 2020 to May 2022, 472 Israeli researchers have won ERC grants for groundbreaking research, at a total amount of Euro 661M<sup>9</sup>. This sum puts Israel (side by side with Switzerland) in the group of countries awarded the highest sums. Such grants allow researchers to develop groundbreaking research in many fields, and contribute to bolstering Israel's status as an integral part of the global research community.

## Areas of excellence

The Israeli higher education system is a center for research and applied innovation, leading over the years to groundbreaking technological developments in science, medicine, engineering, and agriculture. The following is a review of several prominent inventions developed in Israeli universities, reflecting the considerable influence of Israeli academic research on international technological progress.

### » Computer science and data science

Israel is ranked among the leading countries in these fields, with significant contributions to algorithmics, artificial intelligence, information security, and cryptography. Groundbreaking research in these fields has led to many technological applications and successful startups. Prof. Adi Shamir from the Weizmann Institute's Faculty of Computer Science developed the RSA algorithm (in collaboration with Rivest and Adleman), an algorithm that constitutes the global infrastructure for digital information security. He also developed the differential cryptanalysis method along with Biham, which led to a revolution in cryptography system analysis.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Stories of particularly successful EU-funded research projects involving Israel [\[website\]](#)

<sup>8</sup> Ranking of Israel in H2020 [\[website\]](#)

<sup>9</sup> Scientific-research collaboration with the EU as part of the Horizon 2020 programme. Council for Higher Education. May 2022 [\[Source\]](#) (Hebrew)

<sup>10</sup> Adi Shamir. Wikipedia [\[Source\]](#)

USB Flash Drive: development of the portable data storage technology by Dov Moran (Technion alumnus), in conjunction with research conducted in Tel Aviv University<sup>11</sup> and by M-Systems, became a standard storage tool in the technological sphere<sup>12</sup>.

Technologies developed at the Hebrew University include a photo sharpening algorithm, which drastically improved digital processing quality, and was purchased by a global software company. An advanced algorithm was developed for video editing, allowing automatic summarization of video content. Another development is EyeMusic – a system that turns a visual image into music, providing an accessibility solution for the blind by generating an auditory representation of image details.<sup>14</sup>

Prof. Amnon Shashua from the Hebrew University led the development of the sensory technologies that formed the basis for MobilEye, which was sold a decade ago to Intel for more than \$15B and was integrated into the vehicles sold by the world's leading car manufacturers.

It is important to note that Israel is ranked third in the world in the AI Startup Ranking, which ranks countries by AI startup companies. The US is ranked first in this ranking, followed by the UK.<sup>13</sup>

## » Exact sciences

The fields of physics, chemistry and mathematics exhibit impressive achievements with significant contributions to quantum theory, materials science, and mathematical cryptography. For instance, the development of a quantum scanner thermometer, the most sensitive in the world, operating without direct contact with the measured material sample; the system was developed by prof. Eli Zeldov and research student Dorri Halbertal from Weizmann Institute's Faculty of Physics<sup>14</sup>. The Quantum Source company, founded by Weizmann Institute researchers, is now considered a rising star in the evolving world of quantum sensing.

Tel Aviv University researchers developed methods of relaying encryption keys via optic fibers, while using the unique properties of photons for information security. At Ben Gurion University, researchers developed a method of advanced optical encryption based on spreading the information across frequencies and time – a technique which disguises the

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<sup>11</sup> Sandisk joins Tel Aviv University's knowledge commercialization fund TheMarker. November 2013 [\[Source\]](#) (Hebrew)

<sup>12</sup> Invention Driven by Need in a Conference – and Changed the World: the Birth of the Disk-on-Key. YNET. January 2024 [\[Source\]](#) (Hebrew)

<sup>13</sup> AI Startups [\[website\]](#). Startups are ranked based on their total funding amount.

<sup>14</sup> Inventions in Israel. Wikipedia [\[Source\]](#)

signal in the optic fiber's background noise, improving security levels in optical communications.<sup>14</sup>

## » Agriculture and water resource management

Research in these fields has led to groundbreaking developments in precision agriculture, enhancement of varieties resistant to harsh climates, and technologies for water desalination and wastewater treatment<sup>15</sup>, which have been adopted worldwide and have helped Israel cope with its water shortage.

The Hebrew University's Faculty of Agriculture has led two notable developments: the first is TraitUP, a technology that allows insertion of genetic material into seeds without altering their DNA, improving crop traits quickly and efficiently. The second is a new variety of tomato, the Daniela tomato, characterized by high durability, long shelf life, and rich crops, which has become one of the most common tomato varieties in the world.<sup>14</sup>

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev is a leading research center for extreme-condition agriculture and sustainable water management. Its researchers develop innovative solutions for addressing climate changes, for improving water use in arid areas, and for improving crops while preserving the soil and ecosystem. One of Ben-Gurion University's most notable developments in agriculture and water is the use of precise irrigation and fertilization management technologies in arid areas, conducted as part of the Ramat Negev Desert Agro-Research Center at the Sde Boker campus. Research in the Center focuses on developing efficient irrigation and fertilization methods that are adapted to desert conditions, to improve crops productivity and preserve water. Such methods include using precise irrigation technologies and adapted fertilization management, allowing sustainable agriculture in arid areas. Additionally, the Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research, also operating at the Sde Boker campus, focuses on developing advanced water desalination and water treatment technologies for agricultural and industrial use.<sup>16, 17</sup>

## » Life sciences and medicine

Israeli innovation is behind some of the most impressive medical advances of the past few decades. Notables examples include the ReWalk personal exoskeleton allowing people with paralysis to walk again, developed by Technion alumnus Dr. Amit Goffer and currently sold by Lifeward; the Pillcam by Given Imaging (now Medtronic), allowing digestive system imaging, developed by Technion alums; groundbreaking medication Copaxone for multiple sclerosis,

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<sup>15</sup> Innovations, K. (2017). Water Management in Israel.

<sup>16</sup> The Department of Desalination & Water Treatment [\[website\]](#)

<sup>17</sup> 10 Israeli products on TIME's Best Inventions of 2024 list. israel21c. November 2024 [\[source\]](#)

developed by Weizmann Institute of Science researchers<sup>18</sup>, and Azilect<sup>19</sup> for Parkinson's disease, developed by Technion researchers.

Researchers at the Weizmann Institute of Science are leading a line of innovative advances in personalized medicine and preventive medicine. In one research, an AI model was developed to predict blood sugar levels based on personal health data – an advancement that allows early detection and optimal management of diabetes<sup>20</sup>. Another research in collaboration with Beilinson Medical Center exposed a significant link between the composition of intestine bacteria and the risk of heart attack – indicating a potential for treatment by manipulating the human microbiome<sup>21</sup>. The institute also developed a method for mapping all the proteins excreted from the body via the digestive system, allowing a precise analysis of nutrition and intestine bacteria activity, constituting an important research tool for developing new insights about digestive system health<sup>22</sup>.

Tel Aviv University, in collaboration with Harvard University and Brigham Hospital in Boston, developed a remote-controlled tiny endoscopic capsule, intended to roam the human body. The technology enables non-invasive and highly accurate internal testing, with the capsule's progress throughout the body controlled externally. This is a major breakthrough in medical robotics and non-invasive imaging.<sup>23</sup>

Hebrew University researchers developed a medication for Alzheimer based on enzyme inhibition, considered one of the main drugs for the disease. Bar Ilan University researchers developed a line of optical medical devices, including an optical heartbeat monitor that can be used in wearable devices, and a particularly thin optic fiber for vascular endoscopy. Ben-Gurion University researchers developed a miniature ultra-spectral camera, providing an advanced solution for high-resolution imaging, used in a variety of medical applications.<sup>23</sup>

Another advancement by the Hebrew University is a biotechnological system for translating neural signals from the brain into visual movement displayed on a computer screen in real time. The technology, which combines brain science and computer science, provides an infrastructure for brain-computer interfaces (BCI), and may contribute to neurological rehabilitation and to the development of accessibility solutions.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> The top 12 most amazing Israeli medical advances. israel21c. December 2024 [\[source\]](#)

<sup>19</sup> Rasagiline. Wikipedia [\[source\]](#) (Hebrew)

<sup>20</sup> Weizmann Institute researchers, Pheno.AI, and Nvidia developed a generative AI model for predicting blood sugar levels up to 4 years in advance. HaYadan. November 2024 [\[source\]](#) (Hebrew)

<sup>21</sup> Groundbreaking research by Beilinson's Cardiology Division in collaboration with Weizmann Institute of Science found a link between the composition of intestine bacteria and heart attacks. Clalit. February 2022 [\[source\]](#) (Hebrew)

<sup>22</sup> A new method developed at Weizmann Institute exposes the secrets of intestine bacteria. DoctorsOnly. January 2025 [\[source\]](#) (Hebrew)

<sup>23</sup> Inventions in Israel. Wikipedia [\[Source\]](#)

## Summary

The aforementioned developments illustrate the breadth of R&D activity in Israeli universities, and its contribution to a variety of disciplines. These achievements reflect the transition from theoretical knowledge to practical applications in medicine, industry, agriculture, and technology, combining scientific excellence and technological innovation. They contribute to further human knowledge, and help address both local and global challenges. More corroborating evidence is Israeli academia's ranking in the PitchBook high-tech developers ranking, in which five Israeli universities are ranked in the top 50 institutions in terms of the number of alumni who have gone on to found startups.

It is also important to note that beyond the direct contribution of research on university campuses, Israeli academia also has an indirect contribution reflected in the innovations and breakthroughs by its alumni in high-tech, medicine, agriculture, defense, and other fields. One recent and notable example is the largest high-tech sale in Israeli history – the sale of Wiz to Google in March 2025 for a sum of \$32B, a deal characterized as one of the largest purchases in the history of global technology. Wiz's four founders are alumni of Israeli universities: Assaf Rappaport and Yinon Costica both have an MA in computer science from the Technion, Ami Luttwak has an MA in computer sciences from the Hebrew University, and Roy Reznik studied computer sciences at the Open University.<sup>24</sup>

## 2.3 Background about the BDS movement

### General

The BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement is an international campaign intended to increase political and economic pressure on Israel. It is defined by its leaders as a “movement of protest or resistance to the State of Israel's policy on the Palestinian issue” (Bakan & Abu-Laban, 2009). Its roots can be attributed to the 2001 UN Durban Conference on Racism, in which a network of non-governmental organizations declared its support for the boycott of Israel under the guise of protecting human rights and international law. The official global call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction was published on July 7 2005, and was endorsed by over 170 Palestinian and pro-Palestinian associations and organizations (Morrison, 2015; Munayyer, 2016).

The BDS movement attempts to harness civil society to apply pressure, bypassing national diplomacy that is perceived by its leaders as biased. It is inspired by anti-apartheid

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<sup>24</sup> The biggest exit in Israel's history: Wiz to be sold to Google for \$32B. Globes. March 2025 [\[source\]](#) (Hebrew)

movements during the South African apartheid regime (Bakan & Abu-Laban, 2009; Yi & Phillips, 2015).

The movement has gained significant support in various countries, and especially in Europe and North America, where academic institutions, labor unions, and human rights organizations have expressed their conceptual solidarity. This support is often framed within a wider discourse of human rights and social justice, aimed towards progressive movements that espouse equality and anti-racism (Monterescu & Kaddar; Steinberg, 2023). Sadly, there are supporters for the BDS movement's goals even in Israel itself, mostly social activists from the art world and academia. One of the most prominent supporters is historian Prof. Ilan Pappé, formerly a professor at Haifa University and currently a professor at the UK University of Exeter. According to Pappé, Israeli academia is directly or indirectly complicit in what he perceives as crimes the State of Israel is perpetrating on the Palestinian People (e.g., Cassen & Pappé, 2024).

There is also worldwide opposition to the BDS movement, especially on the part of pro-Israeli organizations and governments, claiming that BDS is inherently antisemitic and undermines the legitimacy of the State of Israel, and that it is cherry-picking Israel exclusively, disregarding blatant violations of human rights in other countries (Fishman, 2012; Sheskin & Felson, 2016; Chaitin, Steinberg & Steinberg, 2017).

Prof. Cary Nelson depicts the BDS as a movement whose goal is not only to apply pressure on Israel's policy, but to undermine the actual legitimacy of the Jewish state. In his book "Israel Denial: Anti-Zionism, Anti-Semitism, & The Faculty Campaign Against the Jewish State", Nelson claims that BDS supporters employ means of "negating Israel" – a process aimed at purposefully defaming Israel and distorting historical facts to generate a hostile attitude toward it. He compares negating Israel's legitimacy to holocaust denial, because of their common use of distorted facts with the intent to damage the Jewish state (Nelson, 2019). In his book "The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel", Nelson emphasizes that in the context of academic and cultural BDS, the movement's goals go far beyond criticism towards a specific Israeli policy, and focus on attempts to undermine its political and cultural legitimacy (Nelson, 2015A).



## Influence of the BDS movement

Over the years, the BDS movement had various impacts both within Israel and beyond:

**Socially and politically**, it succeeded in awakening international awareness to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, specifically around human rights issues, which increased the polarization of international discourse between Israel supporters and objectors (Morrison, 2020). It has also affected inner-Israeli discourse, in which it is sometimes perceived as a potential threat on Israel's economic stability (Topor, 2021).

The BDS movement's actual **economic** impact is mixed. Some studies claim that the movement has almost no impact on Israeli economy as a whole, specifically not on its stability and its strong and widespread trade relations with global powerhouses. There is an impact on specific sectors, e.g., the cancellation of cultural events, but the damage is usually financially insignificant, even if symbolically important (Barkay & Shamir, 2020; Katz, 2014).

BDS activity did garner certain success in western **academia**, where instances were recorded of senior professors refusing to maintain relations with Israel, student associations voting to withdraw funds that were already invested in Israeli companies, and professional associations and university departments, especially in the humanities and to a lesser degree in social sciences, declaring a policy of boycotting their Israeli counterparts (Heller, 2017) (details to follow).

Some researchers claim that the purpose of the BDS movement, particularly in its implicit layer, does not focus on direct and immediate economic damage, but on de-legitimizing Israel in the international arena and pressuring it (e.g., Fahlevi, 2023; Hutchison, 2017; Jones, 2018). Individual or institutional passive or implicit support of BDS goals can manifest in several ways, including:

- Refraining from collaboration (cultural, academic, and even commercial)
- Silence pertaining to boycott activities
- Selective involvement (collaboration with individuals but not with institutions, one of the BDS's main strategies) (Garasic & Keinan, 2015).

Explicit participation in BDS should be distinguished from implicit participation. BDS members or individuals who support BDS goals can participate in boycott activities, and can choose whether to declare their support of the boycott. It is also possible to participate in boycotting activities for reasons other than support of BDS goals. For example, Hale (2008) suggests that academics may be concerned about professional implications such as ostracism by colleagues or an institutional response, and sometimes prefer to take pragmatic action that does not stem from political motives, in an attempt to avoid conflict. Therefore,

academics may put a stop to their relations with Israeli institutions and individuals even if they do not support the goals of BDS (Gould, 2013).

Implicit support, whether undeclared or stemming from non-political, pragmatic motives, is a significant challenge for anti-BDS activity (Gerstenfeld, 2003).

## Criticism of the BDS Movement

### General Criticism

The BDS movement against Israel has drawn considerable criticism around its motives and possible implications. Several arguments were raised in this context:

#### » Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism

The most scathing point of criticism about the BDS movement pertains to antisemitism under the guise of anti-Zionism. The movement's rhetoric, including calls to isolate and destroy the Jewish state, are inherently antisemitic. Such calls do not pertain to a certain specific policy by the Israeli government, but to the actual existence of Israel as a Jewish state, undermining the Jewish right for national self-determination (Fishman, 2012). The movement uses language and actions that are a direct perpetuation of historic antisemitic narratives, indicating that it is not political but anti-Jewish (Fishman, 2012; Murciano, 2020; Nelson, 2015A; Nelson, 2019; Sheskin & Felson, 2016).

#### » Ideological Biases

Critics claim that the movement's exclusive focus on Israel disregards other world injustices, as in authoritarian regimes or countries with severe violations of human rights. This selective focus gives rise to questions regarding the movement's motives and priorities (De Shalit, 2016; Sheskin & Felson 2016).

#### » Disrupting Goals of Regional Peace and Security

Critics posit that BDS is a movement that acts against the goal of achieving peace and security in the region. Its strategies, such as calling for academic boycotts, disrupt freedom and dialogue, which are essential for conflict resolution (Yi & Phillips, 2015).

## » **Erroneous Interpretation of Historic Processes**

Support for BDS and the call for divestment in academia stem to a great extent from narratives common to American research and to research on native-American culture. These narratives of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism indicate that the movement and its supporters misapprehend the context and historic complexity. Partial or biased understanding of the issues affects the movement's approach to achieving its goals (J. Pegues, 2016)

Comparing Israel to South Africa during apartheid is also perceived by BDS critics as a misapprehension of historic processes. The white settlers who had come to South Africa as of the 16<sup>th</sup> century had no historic affinity to the location, and to them, the Black people who have already been living there were an inferior race that was only meant to serve them. In contrast, the Jewish people were exiled from Israel 2,000 years ago – long before the birth of Islam and almost 1,900 years before Palestinian nationalism began emerging – and have maintained an emotional affinity to Israel and particularly to its capital Jerusalem all these years. Due to this basic misconception, calls for boycott do not further the possibility of conflict resolution (Topor, 2021).

## » **Exploitation by Extreme Movements**

The BDS movement is perceived as a trans-national boycott movement in line with the anti-imperialistic and anti-colonial ideologies of the extreme left. This ideological similarity is especially conspicuous in the US and Europe, where it has gained substantial traction among leftist groups who view Israel as a symbol of imperialism and western oppression (Lustick & Shils, 2022). The framing of Israel as a litmus test for human rights and justice intersects with the extreme left's wider criticism of global power structures. Activistic and academic circles have adopted BDS as a tool for political action, and often represent it as part of a greater fight against systematic injustices (Divine, 2023).

## » **Criticism about Violation of Academic Principles**

Even among those who consider BDS a movement that fights for what it perceives as injustice, there is criticism about the choice to do so in a way that undermines academic principles. Pertinent arguments include:

### » **Inhibiting academic freedom as a weapon for achieving goals**

BDS activity silences dissenting voices. This means that on the Palestinian issue, there is an attempt to create an exception to the principle of academic freedom (Palestine exception to academic freedom). This is perceived as a mechanism for silencing opposition and criticism about the movement itself, at the cost of inhibiting free academic discourse (Fúnez-Flores,

2024). The attempt to isolate and generate a negative stigma trickles down, over time, to include all Jewish researchers, particularly in the US, and is perceived as a tactic for shutting out Jewish voices in academia (Kramer, 2021). The BDS movement's insistence on its supporters refraining from contact with researchers who voice different opinions weakens the academic tradition of open discourse, exchange of ideas, and free expression (Elman, 2023), and constitutes *de facto* censorship on academic activity (De Shalit, 2016; Wattad, 2011).

### » **Political Intervention in Academic Freedom**

The BDS movement is perceived as a part of a bigger pattern of political intervention in higher education institutions, constituting a threat to academic freedom. Political intervention can manifest as pressure by political elements on donors, which can oppress certain academic viewpoints or certain research agendas (Jecker et al., 2023; Kagee, 2022). Cutting ties with Israeli researchers, as inspired by the BDS Movement, means prioritizing a political agenda over research collaboration (Wattad, 2015).

### » **Creating a Tense Atmosphere on Campus**

The BDS movement is generating a toxic climate on university campuses, particularly in the US. BDS activists are ostracizing Jewish-Zionist students, preventing them from fully participating in campus life (Elman, 2023). Aggressive conduct by anti-Israeli activists, such as disrupting meetings and using unrestrained language, contributes to the polarization of students and does not allow for dialogue (Nelson & Brahm, 2014).

### » **Impact on Innovation and Social Advancement**

As aforesaid, so far the call for boycott and divestment did not have a substantial impact on the sciences or engineering disciplines, or on Israeli innovation. Many of the calls for divestment were made by the student bodies, and not by the university entities authorized to make investment decisions. Any successes were symbolic and not practical, focusing on delegitimizing and not in actively disrupting innovation. However, the potential for damage does exist, whether by disrupting international collaborations, or by preventing funding or access to research infrastructure (Nelson, 2015B).

### » **Funding by foreign nations**

The BDS movement has received nationally-allocated funds from Arab countries since the early 1980s, and this trend has significantly increased in the last two decades, with most of the funding coming from Qatar.

According to Bard (2024), from 1981 to early 2024:

- Almost one quarter of all foreign donations obtained by US universities, \$13.1B, came from Arab individuals, institutions, and governments.
- Three countries are responsible for 83% of Arab funding: Qatar (\$6B), Saudi Arabia (\$3.5B), and United Arab Emirates (\$1.5B).
- Arab entities have made 12,342 donations to 288 institutions in 49 US states (excluding Alaska) and in Washington, D.C.
- Nearly three fourths of these donations, amounting to \$10B (76% of total), do not specify the purpose of the funds.
- Most donations that do specify their purpose are intended for financial assistance to some 31,000 students from Arab countries (mostly from Saudi Arabia).
- Arab funding has grown substantially in recent years – almost one third of all donations were made since 2020.
- Cornell is the largest beneficiary, with a total of \$2.1B. It is followed by Georgetown (\$934M), Texas A&M (nearly \$910M), and Carnegie Mellon (\$900M).
- Due to lax oversight and enforcement, billions of dollars in donations were not reported to the US Department of Education.

Many of these funds were allocated to the humanities and social sciences – through academic appointments, grants, and scholarships – in a way that dictates which courses related to the Middle East and which extracurricular activities will be offered. According to Elman & Romirowsky (2019), this funding caused dangerous harm to academic research, introducing code words such as apartheid, genocide, colonialism, and pinkwashing, to the point that entire disciplines, including Middle Eastern studies, women and gender studies, and ethnic studies, currently rely on these code words, in the service of academics acting as pro-Palestinian activists.

## **Qatar**

The following are several examples of funds flowing from Qatar to leading US universities, and the subsequent outcomes:

**Cornell University:** according to the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP), Cornell, which is the main beneficiary of Qatari funding, had many antisemitic incidents over the years. For instance, in March 2022 the Cornell branch of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), along with the Department of Near Eastern Studies, hosted an event with Mohammed el-Kurd. El-Kurd claimed that Israelis have an “insatiable thirst for Palestinian

blood” and that they “reap the organs of [Palestinian] Shahids and feed their fighters with our flesh” (ISGAP, 2024, March).

**Columbia University:** an ISGAP report (ISGAP, June 2024A) lists all the programs funded by Qatar at Columbia University in the last two decades:

Category	Description	Estimated Qatari funding (in \$)
Collaboration with Qatar Foundation International	Two collaborative projects by Columbia University and QFI	500,000
National Priorities Research Program grants	Six QNRF projects in collaboration with Columbia University, about \$250K for each project	1,500,000
Energy partnerships between Qatar and Columbia University	Seven research projects between the Gas Processing Center at Qatar University, and Columbia’s Chemistry Department	1,750,000
Education partnerships between Qatar and Columbia University	A Columbia delegation to Education City in 2014, and WISE conference in 2019 with UNESCO and Teachers College	Cannot be estimated
Student grants	According to estimates, Qatar funded about 38 cumulative school years for Qatari students as part of this program, amounting to approx. \$3.42M.	3,420,000

**Yale University:** the ISGAP estimates that Yale University had reported a total of \$284K from Qatar since 2012, while actually receiving sums that are 50 and more times larger than reported (ISGAP, June 2024B).

These funds affected academic content, particularly content supporting anti-Israeli views. In many cases, Qatari funding is associated with faculty members who are known as distinct BDS supporters. One example is Prof. Beshara Doumani, currently president of Bir Zeit University and formerly a professor at Brown University’s Department of Palestinian studies, who

received funds from Qatar and is known for his vocal support of BDS and for promoting anti-Israeli views in his classes (Investigative Project on Terrorism, 2017).

## Iran

Iran is considered one of the main forces behind the BDS movement, although no evidence has been found of substantial and direct Iranian-government funding in the academic arena. It plays a key role in promoting extreme anti-Israeli propaganda in Europe, by means such as Quds Day parades in cities like Berlin and London, participated by Hizballah supporters, radical leftists, and even neo-Nazis. Iran's funding of Hizballah also contributes to BDS, mainly through Hizballah fighters who have infiltrated into European countries disguised as refugees (Romirowsky & Weinthal, 2018).

### » BDS is evolving

This section pertains to the strategic, media-related, and technological changes the BDS movement has been undergoing in the past two decades.

#### BDS strategic development

In the past twenty years, the BDS movement has evolved from a traditional boycott tactic to a sophisticated strategy of global influence. Israel is contending with a soft-power warfare campaign – International BDS campaigns accompanied by psychological warfare and diplomatic and legal initiatives intended to undermine its status<sup>25</sup>. The following are examples of this evolution:

#### Influence campaigns and psychological warfare

The BDS movements employs various influence tactics (soft-power warfare) targeted at international audiences, to indirectly increase the pressure on Israel. For instance, in 2015 the Palestinian Authority acted, with the support of BDS activity, to suspend Israel from FIFA, intending to use an international sports organization as a political pressuring tool. Their selection of sports was not incidental: excluding Israel from international competitions was meant to carry deep symbolic meaning, given the role of sports and culture as soft power agents in national identity<sup>26</sup>.

Simultaneously, the movement integrates its endeavors with other global social justice movements to extend the distribution of its message; one notable example is the Ferguson

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<sup>25</sup> Steinberg, G. M. (2023). Israel's response to boycotts and soft-power warfare. In S. Rynhold & O. Franks (Eds.), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Israel* (pp. 1–19). Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>26</sup> Lutz, N. (2022). A game of Whac-A-Mole: The BDS movement and its fluidity across international political opportunity structures. *Israel Studies Review*, 37(3), 58–81. <https://doi.org/10.3167/isr.2022.370304>



riots in Missouri in 2014, when BDS activists publicly connected the Palestinian fight with the US Black Lives Matter movement, creating an international link that enhanced their legitimacy in the eyes of many social groups<sup>27</sup>.

The movement's activities are supported by a network of NGOs and external funding: every year, European governments and international funds contribute dozens of millions of Euros to non-governmental organizations that purport to defend human rights, thus directly and indirectly supporting BDS initiatives. External funding allows these organizations to promote public campaigns and academic and legal initiatives like the Israeli Apartheid week on campuses and "lawfare" in international courts, intended to promote BDS objectives and pressurize Israel in the international arena. This creates a political "subcontracting" model, in which western governments provide BDS organizations with funding and access to the international arena<sup>28</sup>, the movement disseminates its initiatives on a wide-scale through social media, using hundreds of student and activist groups around the world on Facebook and Twitter, which coordinate boycotts and disseminate content intended to shape international public opinion against Israel<sup>29</sup> (more details to come). These steps gradually erode the willingness of international elements to identify with Israel, increasing its isolation and ideologically complementing direct financial BDS efforts. The result is a multidimensional campaign: not merely a commercial boycotting, but a global front of soft-power psychological warfare seeking to undermine Israel's legitimacy in the long term.

## Digital social media

The emergence of digital media revolutionized the way information is disseminated and political activity is organized. Social media platforms have become powerful tools for promoting agendas, allowing activists to disseminate information, organize events, and create support networks without geographic limitations and at minimal cost. The immediacy of information dissemination on social media increased awareness to issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, allowing activists to rapidly react to events such as military action, suspicions of human rights violations, or political developments<sup>30</sup>.

In the months following October 7, for example, social media played a key role in spreading narratives concerning the conflict. The instantaneous sharing of videos, photos, and personal

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<sup>27</sup> Bailey, K. D. (2015). Black–Palestinian solidarity in the Ferguson–Gaza era. *American Quarterly*, 67(4), 1017-1026.

<sup>28</sup> Steinberg, G. M. (2023). The apartheid and racism campaigns-the NGO contribution to antisemitism. *Israel Affairs*, 29(1), 52-72.

<sup>29</sup> Hitchcock, J. (2016). Social media rhetoric of the transnational Palestinian-led boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement. *Social Media+ Society*, 2(1), 2056305116634367.

<sup>30</sup> See: Zeitzoff, T. (2017). How social media is changing conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(9), 1970-1991.

testimonies influenced public perceptions and generated strong emotional responses, especially among the younger generations. This digital activity generated a sense of urgency and solidarity, driving many academics to reexamine their views about involvement with Israeli institutions<sup>31</sup>.

One of the main characteristics of digital social media is the abbreviated and focused nature of content. Short tweets on X (formerly Twitter), seconds-long videos on TikTok, and condensed posts on Instagram and Facebook – are all meant to instantly draw attention and generate immediate involvement. Within such an environment, there is almost no space – and sometimes no demand – for in-depth discussions or complex perspectives. This fact plays into the hands of the BDS movement, which manages to relay simple, unequivocal, and emotionally loaded messages that easily connect with young audiences and invoke quick responses. The relative superficiality of the platform does not diminish from the messages' effectiveness; quite the contrary – it helps them disseminate quickly and take root in public discourse.

## Developments in media

Traditional media has also undergone a substantial transformation in response to changes in global political and in public opinion. With the emergence of independent media channels and alternative new platforms, narratives that challenge the mainstream depictions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have garnered more exposure. Such platforms often introduce Palestinian voices and experiences, contributing to a deeper and more complex understanding of the conflict<sup>32</sup>.

Following meaningful events, such as military campaigns or escalations in violence, media coverage has a crucial impact on public opinion. The period following October 7 was characterized by increased media coverage of Israeli actions, influencing public opinion and academic discourse. The presentation of the conflict in various media channels can strengthen or undermine existing biases, leading to more demands for accountability, and accordingly, for support of academic BDS.

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<sup>31</sup> See: Nasereddin, S. (2023). Impact of social media platforms on international public opinion during the Israel war on Gaza. *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 35(1), 5-31.

<sup>32</sup> Dunsky, M. (2008). *Pens and swords: How the American mainstream media report the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*. Columbia University Press.

## Artificial intelligence

The Large Language Models (LLMs) that are increasingly in use are given to data bias, algorithmic bias, and societal bias, which are interconnected and influence one another. Data bias stems from the prejudices that are integrated into the training data. Algorithmic bias stems from the design and structure of LLMs, and often perpetuates existing biases. Societal bias is the result of the wide sociocultural context in which these systems operate, reflecting and increasing the inequality already prevalent in society<sup>33</sup>. It is therefore easy to understand that models that had been trained on data reflecting antisemitic and anti-Israeli views, within a society with antisemitic and anti-Israeli views, can produce distorted and biased insights.

Preliminary signs of that are already evident, for instance in machine-learning-based applications for classifying and tagging products in accordance with BDS ideology<sup>3435</sup>.

In the academic context, the more automated decision-making becomes, the more likely it is that journals, conferences, entities providing research grants, entities organizing international collaborations, and academic entities in general, will make decisions or filter based on biased information, knowingly or unknowingly, causing Israeli researchers to be excluded.

Furthermore, the improvement in AI software's capability to create visual content made it easier to spread false information (fake news) using photos and videos. BDS supporters can nowadays easily generate baseless visual content, which is sometimes hard to identify as such, allegedly illustrating severe human rights violations or shocking scenarios of violence on the part of Israel. This type of content can be disseminated on social media extremely quickly, invoking emotional reactions and strengthening the calls for BDS support, even though they are based on fake information.

Moreover, BDS supporters use Israel's relative advantage in the field of AI to further demonize its academic institutions. As Israel is perceived as an AI powerhouse, it is claimed that artificial intelligence research being conducted in Israel directly or indirectly facilitates the development of systems that are used to oversee, monitor, or oppress Palestinians. This

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<sup>33</sup> Shah, M., & Sureja, N. (2025). A comprehensive review of bias in deep learning models: Methods, impacts, and future directions. *Archives of Computational Methods in Engineering*, 32(1), 255-267.

<sup>34</sup> Banhawly, M., Soliman, A., Eldean, A. B., Youssef, A. M., Wageh, R. Y., Fady, R., & Sayed, G. I. (2024, July). A Mobile-Based Deep Learning Model for Product Classification in Support of Boycott Campaigns. In *International Conference on Advanced Intelligent Systems and Informatics* (pp. 152-161). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

<sup>35</sup> Nazri, M. H. M., Hakim, M. F. A. Z., & Zainuddin, A. A. BOICOTT: Mobile Application to Distinguish Boycotted Product. *INTERNATIONAL GRAND INVENTION, INNOVATION AND DESIGN EXPO (IGIIDeation) 2025*, 73.

reinforces a narrative that involvement with Israeli academic institutions is tantamount to legitimizing war crimes<sup>36</sup>.

## Summary

Increased support for academic BDS of Israeli universities in the past two decades stems from a combination of ideological changes, emergence of digital media, and evolvement of media narratives. Following October 7, these factors intersected to create an atmosphere of activism and solidarity among those who support Palestinian rights. Inherent biases in LLMs may continue to reinforce this atmosphere in the future.

## 2.4 BDS Activity in the Academic Arena until 10/06/2023

In the years 2005-2023, the BDS movement operated on several levels within the academic community. Its actions gained certain support from world academics and institutions, who perceived it as a non-violent movement promoting human rights and justice (Darweish & Rigby, 2018; Handmaker, 2014).

Nelson (2015A) emphasizes that BDS activity in academia does not stop at criticism towards a certain Israeli policy, but seeks to prevent cultural and political legitimacy. He notes that BDS supporters in academia often tend to mix opposition to the Israeli government's policy and opposition to Zionism in general.

One of the movement's main strategies is calling for academics and academic institutions worldwide to **refrain from collaborating with Israeli academic institutions**. Partial lists of world institutions that have acceded to this call are available on Wikipedia<sup>37</sup>, on the AMCHA Initiatives website<sup>38</sup>, and on BDS websites such as US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> See: Fake babies, real horror: Deepfakes from the Gaza war increase fears about AI's power to mislead, AP, Nov, 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/artificial-intelligence-hamas-israel-misinformation-ai-gaza-a1bb303b637ffbbb9cbc3aa1e000db47>; Deep Fake in Swords of Iron: A battle for Public Opinion. INSS Report, Nov. 2023 <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/war-deep-fake/>; Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) and the Israel-Hamas war, ADL Report, Oct. 2023. <https://www.adl.org/resources/article/generative-artificial-intelligence-gai-and-israel-hamas-war>; Artificial Genocidal Intelligence: how Israel is automating human rights abuses and war crimes, AccessNow, May 2024, <https://www.accessnow.org/publication/artificial-genocidal-intelligence-israel-gaza/>; Israel built an 'AI factory' for war. It unleashed it in Gaza. The Washington Post, Dec. 2024. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/12/29/ai-israel-war-gaza-idf/>; Israel's use of AI in Gaza is a terrifying model coming to a country near you. Middle East Eye, Jan. 2025. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/israel-use-ai-gaza-terrifying-model-coming-country-near-you>

<sup>37</sup> Wikipedia: [Academic boycott of Israel](#)

<sup>38</sup> Amcha Initiatives: [Academic Associations Boycotting Israel](#)

<sup>39</sup> US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel: [Academic Associations Endorsing Boycott and Resolutions](#)

Garasic & Keinan (2015) describe an example in Australia, where a professor in the University of Sydney (J. Lynch) had rejected an Israeli academic's application for a visiting professor position as part of the BDS campaign. Lynch was accused of violating Australia's racial discrimination prohibition law, even though he claimed that his decision was not influenced by the candidate's Jewish identity, and that he viewed it as an action not against the individual but against an Israeli institution, in protest of the Israeli government's policy. Ultimately, the claimant in the case chose to withdraw the claim, leading to its dismissal by the court<sup>40</sup>.

One of the main arguments sounded by BDS supporters against Israeli universities is that they collaborate with the Israeli defense industry in the development of weapon systems and by providing technological and other training for soldiers and officers. There are indeed quite a few research projects conducted in Israeli universities that are funded by the defense system, but the claim that these projects are engaged in developing weapon systems is completely false. Such projects develop knowledge, research methods, and the like, which may later be used by the defense industry in Israel or in other countries. In this regard, there is no difference between Israeli universities and their counterparts in western countries. MIT, Cal-Tech, and many other American universities receive millions of US dollars each year from American defense agencies, as is the case in the UK, Germany, and other countries. Israeli soldiers and officer do study in Israeli universities as part of academic reserve programs or other training programs. This practice as well is common in foreign universities, especially in a large number of US universities that offer the ROTC program (much like the Israeli Academic Reserve program). Of course, none of those protesting against Israeli universities in this context bother to criticize university defense research and military training programs in their own countries.

Another main strategy is “**divestment**” – a campaign encouraging universities and academic institutions to withdraw investments from companies that collaborate with Israel (e.g., Kolhatkar, 2024). Many western universities have endowments that accumulate donation funds, which are then used to support academic appointments and research, and to increase operational revenue. Such funds are estimated to have managed approx. \$849 billion in 2023 (US only)<sup>41</sup>. Many of these endowments are managed by teams of financial experts, and are invested in stock markets by way of investment portfolios. In the US, academic endowments that amount to \$1B or more are managed by the university's investment office, headed by a Chief Investment Officer (CIO), who is responsible for managing the assets and the daily activity, and for communicating issues of risk management and investment strategy to the university's governing council (Malinova, 2022).

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<sup>40</sup> See relevant article on the Channel 7 website: [NGO Attacks the Academic Boycott | Channel 7 \(Hebrew\)](#) (Ben Porat, 2013)

<sup>41</sup> According to data by the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) [Historic Endowment Study Data](#)

It is estimated that only a small percentage of all endowment funds is directly invested in Israel, but they are responsible for 2%-3% of the foreign capital funneled into the Israeli high-tech industry. However, should universities decide to refrain from investing in Israeli companies, this could also affect the entire market and cause considerable damage, as the market perceives the universities as its moral campus (Gilad, 2024).

## Limited Influence of Academic BDS

Despite the BDS movement's tendency to declare multiple successes, there is actually considerable evidence as to the **academic BDS's failure** in isolating Israeli academia and pressuring Israel to change its policy up until the war broke out in October 2023. For instance:

Newman (2016) states that despite the BDS, Israel has continued to be a major player in the international scientific community, drawing in research investments and participants for conferences held in Israel. In many cases, foreign governments and large universities have refused to cooperate with the BDS movement in the name of academic freedom, and by virtue of the Israeli academic community's high level and scientific excellence. According to Newman, academic BDS has a mostly symbolic value, and although it garners a lot of attention in the media, in actuality the impact of the call for BDS of academic collaboration with Israel is limited and did not substantially disrupt the activity of Israeli academic institutions.

Rose (2009) and Rose & Rose (2008) concur, and posit that the movement's main success is its ability to keep the issue on the international academic agenda, and not in causing tangible disruptions to academic activity.

Berlin (2010) also supports this approach, and claims that the BDS had almost no direct effect on the research outputs of Israeli universities and on their international ranking. However, he does recognize that the BDS has increased polarization within the academic community.

Ben-Tsur (2009) concurs that the direct effect on Israeli academia's research outputs is indeed minimal, yet emphasizes that the BDS movement generates another implicit impact, reflected in a climate of tension and uncertainty with a potential influence on the willingness of certain researchers to collaborate with Israeli institutions.

Barkay & Shamir (2020) investigated the widespread impacts of BDS, and claim that its influence is beyond the immediate academic metric. They posit that the movement impacts discourse about academic freedom and the role of academia in political activism. This impact has increased discussions in academic circles about issues such as the ethical responsibility of researchers and institutions in politically-charged topics.

To summarize, the impact of the academic BDS of Israel is mainly manifested in the following areas:

- **Impact on academic discourse:** this is significantly a bottom-up influence, rooted in students and faculty who are involved in political activity and are changing the dynamics of academic discourse (Nelson, 2015B; Riemer, 2022).
- **Increased involvement in progressive politics:** the academic BDS movement is engaged in wide progressive political issues, such as the rise of the extreme right. This involvement impacts academic discourse by encouraging researchers to incorporate political activism and advocacy in their academic work, reshaping the traditional borders of academic research (Riemer, 2022).
- **Possible damage to the careers of individual researchers:** mostly young researchers who do not have the resources or reputation to withstand the boycott effects, despite declarations by BDS leaders that they only go after institutions and not individual researchers (Nelson, 2015A; Nussbaum, 2007).

## 2.5 Counteraction Against Academic BDS until 10/6/2023

### In Israel

#### National-level Action

##### » Ministerial Responsibility

Traditionally, the handling of antisemitism and various boycotts fell under the purview of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2009, the government transferred the authority for handling foreign attempts to de-legitimize Israel to the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, without derogating from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' responsibilities in this regard, which caused redundancies and drew criticism (State Comptroller of Israel, 2016). In October 2015, the Ministerial Committee on National Security Affairs (State Security Cabinet) decided to charge the Ministry of Strategic Affairs and Public Diplomacy with the responsibility of leading the fight against attempts to de-legitimize and boycott Israel, using a comprehensive inter-ministerial system. When this Ministry was dismantled in 2021, its responsibilities were returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Azulai, 2021). In February 2023, it was decided to transfer responsibility for leading the fight against attempts to de-legitimize and boycott Israel from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, and to change its name to the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism (Israeli government, 2023).



Public diplomacy: over the years, Israel has recognized the need to use public diplomacy strategies to combat academic BDS. The need for scientific measurement of public opinion and of the effectiveness of persuasion techniques, and the need to develop quick-response teams to support Israel's arguments and refute false information, were recognized (e.g., Gilboa, 2006; Sarvestani et al., 2019).

Steinberg (2023) refers to this type of action as “soft-power warfare”, and mentions in this context the establishment of the Ministry of Strategic Affairs in 2015. The Ministry of Strategic Affairs was put in charge of coordinating the efforts to combat campaigns against Israel, including the BDS campaign. Its role also included addressing increasing use of terms such as “apartheid” to isolate Israel, as well as formulating responses for UN denunciations, withdrawal of pension fund investments, etc.

Israel's public diplomacy network consists of many components, including NGOs, research institutes, and public advocacy groups, who disseminate positive narratives about Israel. In addition, the Israeli government collaborates with the US pro-Israeli lobby to generate a supportive environment in American public opinion (Sarvestani et al., 2019).

The government's efforts to highlight Israel's academic, technological, and financial global contribution, and its support of international collaborations in these fields, are an important pillar in the fight against academic BDS (Gilboa, 2006).

## » **Legislation**

Over the years, the Israeli government has used legal warfare, or “lawfare”, both within the country and beyond, to disrupt BDS activities – including legislation forbidding foreign citizens who are BDS supporters from entering Israel (Abu-Laban & Bakan, 2023), and filing legal complaints against BDS supporters in US academia through organizations such as Legal Insurrection<sup>42</sup> and the Brandeis Center<sup>43</sup>. Israel also endeavored to convince foreign governments and US states to adopt anti-BDS legislation (Handmaker, 2020) (details to follow).

## » **De-legitimizing BDS**

A substantial part of Israel's activities concentrated on framing BDS as an antisemitic movement that is attempting to de-legitimize Israel's existence. Israeli representatives have regularly repeated on various international stages that this is not a form of legitimate, non-

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<sup>42</sup> [Legal Insurrection Foundation](#)

<sup>43</sup> [Homepage | Brandeis Center](#)

violent resistance, but a campaign whose main tenets are hostility and hatred towards Israel and Jews (Carter et al., 2012; Sheskin & Felson, 2016).

### » **Involvement in Academia and Culture**

Israel has endeavored to prevent cultural and academic boycotts by globally promoting Israeli culture and academia. These efforts included organizing international cultural events and academic collaborations that shine a light on Israel's contribution to global knowledge and culture (Chaitin et al., 2017). Additionally, the government endeavored to ensure that Israeli artists and academics will not be ostracized from international forums (Steinberg & Steinberg, 2017).

### » **Strengthening Financial and Diplomatic Relationships**

Strengthening financial and diplomatic relationships with key global players is a cornerstone of Israeli strategy. By cultivating strong trade relations and strategic alliances, Israel strives to create a network of support that can withstand BDS pressures. Israel's diplomatic efforts were also focused on emphasizing the economic and technological advantages of collaborations, thus deterring countries and companies from participating in BDS-related activities (Lim, 2012).

It should be noted that despite the effectiveness of the Israeli government's endeavors, the framing of BDS as an antisemitic movement was not accepted everywhere, and there are still audiences around the world who perceive it as a human-rights movement fighting against non-compliance with international law. The effectiveness of anti-BDS legislation is also disputed, with some considering it a violation of the freedom of speech, which may lead to an adverse response (Morrison, 2015; Svirsky, 2015).

Israel's efforts to fight the academic boycott were uncoordinated in the last two decades, and tended to be sporadic and lacking in quantitative performance indicators, as specified in the 2015 State Comptroller Report (State Comptroller of Israel, 2016). The redundancy of responsible elements, their lack of coordination, and the lack of work plans and budget utilization have persisted for many years, including during October 2023 and the following months (State Control Committee, 2023).

## Action by Israeli Academia and Academic Community

The Israeli academic community employed several strategies to fight academic BDS. Examples include:

### » Academic Activism and Global Engagement

Over the years, senior officers and researchers in Israeli academia have collaborated with international entities that are opposed to academic boycotts and criticize them as antithetical to academic freedom. One example of many is the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies organization, which has supported this idea over the years and have even expressed it in its declarations, like the declaration published in *Science* in 2007 (International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies, 2007). Israeli academics have joined global justice networks and social movements, and collaborate in discussions and actions that coincide with larger goals of social justice (Mason, 2013).

Another example is the campaign by researchers and doctors against *The Lancet's* editor, after the journal had published an anti-Israeli article which then Minister of Health German termed “borders on blood libel” (Gal, 2014). The letter spurred a heated global debate, with critics branding the letter “anti-Jewish” and questioning the authors’ possible conflict of interest (Arya et al., 2015). As part of the debate, several leading Israeli researchers and doctors, including two Noble Prize laureates – Prof. Aharon Ciechanover and Prof. Avram Hershko – and presidents of Israeli academic institutions including Prof. Daniel Zajfman (Weizmann Institute) and Prof. Peretz Lavie (Technion), wrote a response letter that was also published in *The Lancet*. The letter discussed the complex dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, criticized the depiction of Israel’s actions as aggressive, emphasized the role of Hamas in perpetuating the conflict, and protested the call for severe sanctions on Israel (Ahmed, 2014). Later on, *The Lancet's* editor-in-chief, Richard Horton, was invited to visit Israel (including Rambam Medical Center among other locations), to better understand the workings of the Israeli health system under political strain. Horton had expressed regret for causing polarization by publishing the controversial letter about the Gaza conflict, and suggested collaborating with Israeli health professionals in future publications (Blazer, 2015).

### » Promoting Diversification and Inclusion in the Academic Space

Traditionally, Israeli academia has been a vanguard of equality and human rights. Israeli universities offer support for Israeli minority groups (Muslims, Christians, Druse, Circassian, and others) and for encouraging higher education within them, as well as courses and programs that encourage dialogue between Jewish and Arab students, all in an effort to overcome structural inequality and cultivate a culture of open-mindedness and intellectual rigor (e.g., Hager, Saba & Shay, 2011).

As of 2016, a program for assimilating processes of diversification and inclusion in Israeli academic institutions has been operating with the support of the Council for Higher Education, the Planning and Budgeting Committee, and several philanthropic funds. The main groups defined as target populations by the Council for Higher Education are Arabs (including Druse and Circassian), alums of the *Haredi* education system, individuals of Ethiopian descent, and individuals with disabilities. As part of the program, academic institutions have added a diversification coordinator position, training activities were held for academic and administrative staff, and learning strategies and practices were formulated to promote diversification and inclusion. Some Israeli universities (Hebrew University, Technion, Tel Aviv, and Ben-Gurion) currently have diversification and inclusion VPs. Other universities have Diversification, Equality and Inclusion units, while colleges have DE&I coordinators (Rosen, 2023).

### » Addressing the Ethical Issues of Boycotts

Israeli researchers have criticized the ethical basis of academic boycotts, claiming that they unjustly punish academics and institutions. They argue that academic institutions cannot be held responsible for government policy, and that boycotts inhibit the free flow of ideas and scientific collaboration (e.g., Pasternak, 2011; Sheskin & Felson, 2016; and many others).

### » Maintaining Academic Excellence

Israeli academic institutions uphold strict academic standards, and cultivate a research-positive environment in terms of academic freedom. Israeli academia's high level of scientific excellence ensures its continued participation in international conferences and research collaborations, mitigating the influence of BDS attempts to isolate it (Newman, 2023). Moreover, the refusal of many leading governments and universities to support BDS can be partially attributed to their recognition of the academic contributions of Israeli institutions, which are considered important collaborators in the global scientific community (Newman, 2023; Wattad, 2015).

## Action Against BDS beyond Israel's Borders

### 1. Legislation Against BDS in General

Israel and other BDS-opposing countries have developed several ways of addressing the calls for academic boycotts, on both the institutional and national levels. One of the most significant steps is a legislative effort in Israel to impose punitive measures on individuals and institutions who call for such boycotts. One example is Prof. Noam Chomsky being banned

entry to Israel when he attempted to lecture at Bir Zeit University in 2010. The US has also taken the legislative approach, and made a legislative endeavor to neutralize the BDS movement (Falah, 2016).

## World Legislation Examples

### » USA<sup>44</sup>

#### State Legislation

Anti-BDS laws aimed at companies that boycott Israel were first legislated in 2015. Such laws developed over the years in two tracks:

- Laws that prohibit states from engaging with companies or individuals, unless they undertake not to boycott Israel
- Laws that prohibit pension-fund investments in companies that boycott Israel (Friedman, 2023)

#### Federal Legislation

A considerable share of the federal laws pertaining to BDS in recent years concentrate on legislatively enshrining parts of the working definition of antisemitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which connects antisemitism to anti-Zionist or anti-Israel expression.

In December 2019, as antisemitism was on the rise among right-wing elements identified with then US President, Donald Trump, the Executive Order on Combating Anti-Semitism was issued by Trump. The executive order substantially focused on enforcing the IHRA's definition in US campuses, despite various entities' objections to its adoption, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and academics, who claimed that identifying anti-Israel expression with antisemitism constitutes violation of academic freedom.

In May 2023, the Biden administration launched the US's first ever national strategy for combating antisemitism, which recognizes the significance of the IHRA's definition of antisemitism within a series of other definitions (Friedman, 2023).

The following link contains a full list of laws, both state-level and federal:

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<sup>44</sup> Anti-BDS Laws, Dataset by Lara Friedman for the Foundation for Middle East Peace  
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1iJu-VvTGPYt76szpkkgg4lN2RuIdz0crK1P4eihpkl8/edit?gid=146340936#gid=146340936>

### Anti-BDS Laws, Dataset by Lara Friedman for the Foundation for Middle East Peace

The following figure attests to the link between anti-Israeli activity on US campuses and the legislation and IHRA definitions in the states in which they operate<sup>45</sup>.

Figure 1: Mapping of leading US universities involved in academic BDS against Israel, and link to state legislation against BDS and IHRA definition of antisemitism

University	State has anti-BDS law	State codified IHRA definition	Sample of BDS Resolutions by Student/Faculty Groups	Type of boycott	Travel alert against Israel
MIT	✗	✗	✓	Academic & Financial	✓
Harvard	✗	✗	✓	Financial	✓
Brown	✓	✓	✓	Financial	✓
Rutgers	✓	✗	✓	Academic & Financial	✗
Columbia	✓	✗	✓	Academic & Financial	✓
NYU	✓	✗	✓	Financial	Requires pre authorization
Yale	✗	✗	✓	Financial	n/a
Berkeley	✗	✗	✓	Financial	✗
Stanford	✗	✗	✓	Financial	✓
Penn	✓	✗	✓	Financial	✗

## » UK

On June 19 2023, the Conservative Party proposed a bill banning public bodies from imposing boycotts unauthorized by the UK government against foreign countries in general, and specifically boycotts aimed against Israel. This came as a response to the political climate in the UK, where several municipal-governance bodies and universities supported a boycott of Israel as a means of protest against Israeli policy and activity, and in support of Palestinian rights (Friedman, 2023).

## » Germany and Austria

In May 2019, the German Bundestag voted in favor of a bill to classify the international BDS movement as an element that uses antisemitic tactics as a means of achieving its political goals (Nasr & Alkousaa, 2019). Austria passed its own similar resolution in February 2020 (Sion-

<sup>45</sup> The figure is based on IAC data. Thanks to Sagit Sade Attia for sharing these findings.

Tzidkiyahu & Hirsch, 2020). The wording of these resolutions reflects the IHRA's working definition to a great extent.

Note that legislation in both the US and Europe often reflects a separation between Israel within 1967 borders and the west bank and east Jerusalem territories, and does not oppose BDS activity in these territories (e.g., Sion-Tzidkiyahu & Hirsch, 2020; Zanotti et al., 2017).

## 2. Action to Prevent Violation of Academic Freedom

The BDS movement has gained traction in certain academic circles, especially in Europe, where calls for BDS were supported by organizations like the British University and College Union. Some have claimed that academic boycotts mix academy and politics in a way that is opposed to principles of academic freedom and the universality of science (Berlin, 2010; Executive Committee of the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies, 2007).

In Israel, the involvement of Israeli academics in boycott support has been controversial, and there were even calls to take punitive action against faculty members who support BDS (Seliktar, 2005).

The following are examples of actions taken by various bodies in the world academic arena to combat academic BDS:

Strategic communication and image: exposing the antisemitism in the BDS campaign and its intent to destroy the State of Israel, and emphasizing the democratic values common to Israel and the western world (Cohen & Avraham, 2018). This type of communication had, for example, impact on the discussions in US academic professional associations around the impact of BDS on academic freedom (Wattad, 2015).

Institutional and organizational opposition: many academic institutions and municipal governance bodies in the US have rejected BDS initiatives in the name of academic freedom. Objection to BDS on the part of institutions and governance bodies has been instrumental for academic collaboration and investment in Israeli academia (Newman, 2023). In addition, organizations were founded that focus on promoting academic freedom and on countering anti-Israeli narratives, such as Scholars for Peace in the Middle East<sup>46</sup>, Campus Watch<sup>47</sup>, ICPG<sup>48</sup>, Academic Engagement Network<sup>49</sup> and others (Hirsh, 2012; Wagner, 2010).

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<sup>46</sup> <https://spme.org/>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.meforum.org/campus-watch>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.icpg.org.uk/>

<sup>49</sup> [Academic Engagement Network](#)

Legal strategies: to protect academic freedom and address BDS, several legal strategies were taken. These include using legal mechanisms to protect academics who criticize Israel and to expose possible involvement in international crimes. Adversely, pro-Israeli elements are using legal tactics (lawfare) to counteract criticism against Israel (Handmaker, 2020).

## 2.6 BDS Activity in the Academic Arena Since 10/07/2023

The events of October 7 2023 were a turning point in Israeli history in general, and had a specific significant impact on Israeli academia and researchers worldwide. Following these events, the BDS movement intensified its focus on Israeli academia, while inhibiting Israeli researchers' academic freedom, personal safety, and international collaborations.

### » Exposure to Antisemitism and Hatred

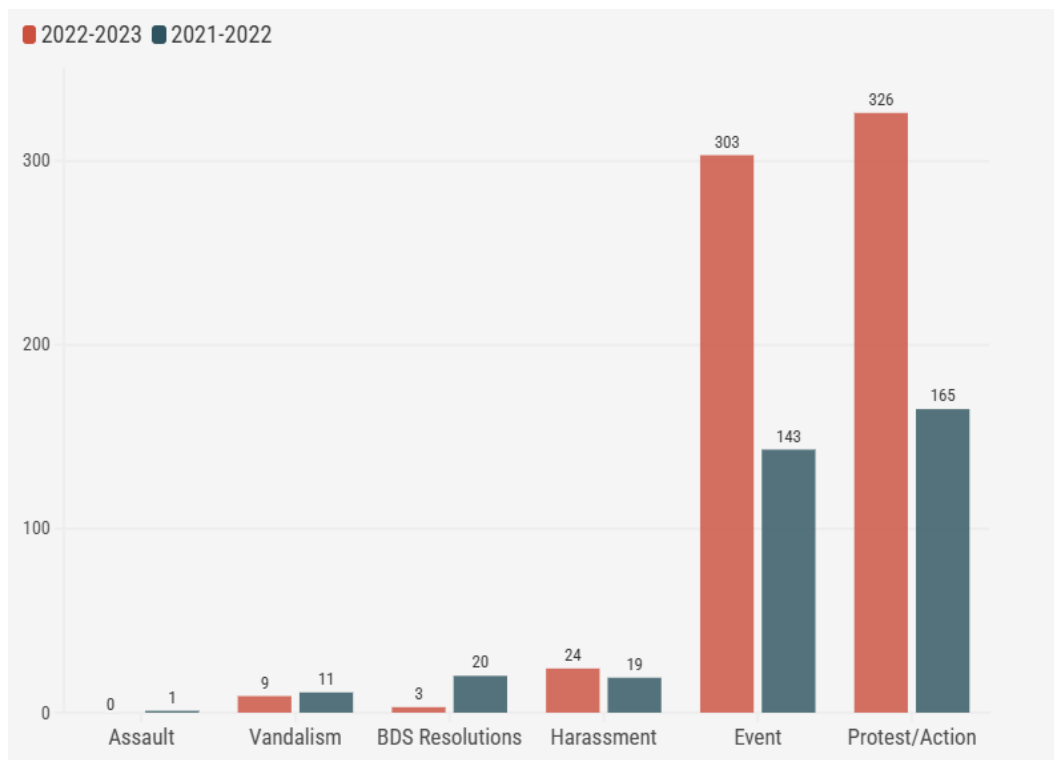
Following October 7, there has been an increase in antisemitism and manifestations of hatred towards Jews in general and Israelis in particular. A survey conducted in the US, Canada, and Europe revealed a dramatic increase in exposure to hatred and antagonism following October 7. There have been considerable increases in hate speech against Israel, unsanctioned disclosures of personal information about researchers in social media (doxing), dehumanization of Jews and Israelis, and public demonstrations and activities against Israel. Israeli researchers have felt uncomfortable expressing their political or religious beliefs or even wear Jewish insignia in foreign campuses, and have reported feeling that world higher education institutions were not effective in ensuring their personal safety on campus (Santos & Yogev, 2024).

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) recorded 665 anti-Israeli incidents on campus during the 2022-2023 academic year: nine cases of vandalism; 24 cases of harassment; 303 events; 326 protests/actions; and three BDS resolutions (all three resolutions passed in undergraduate student bodies) (Anti-Defamation League, 2023).

The following figure shows the substantial increase in anti-Israeli incidents on US campuses following October 7 2023, according to the Anti-Defamation League:



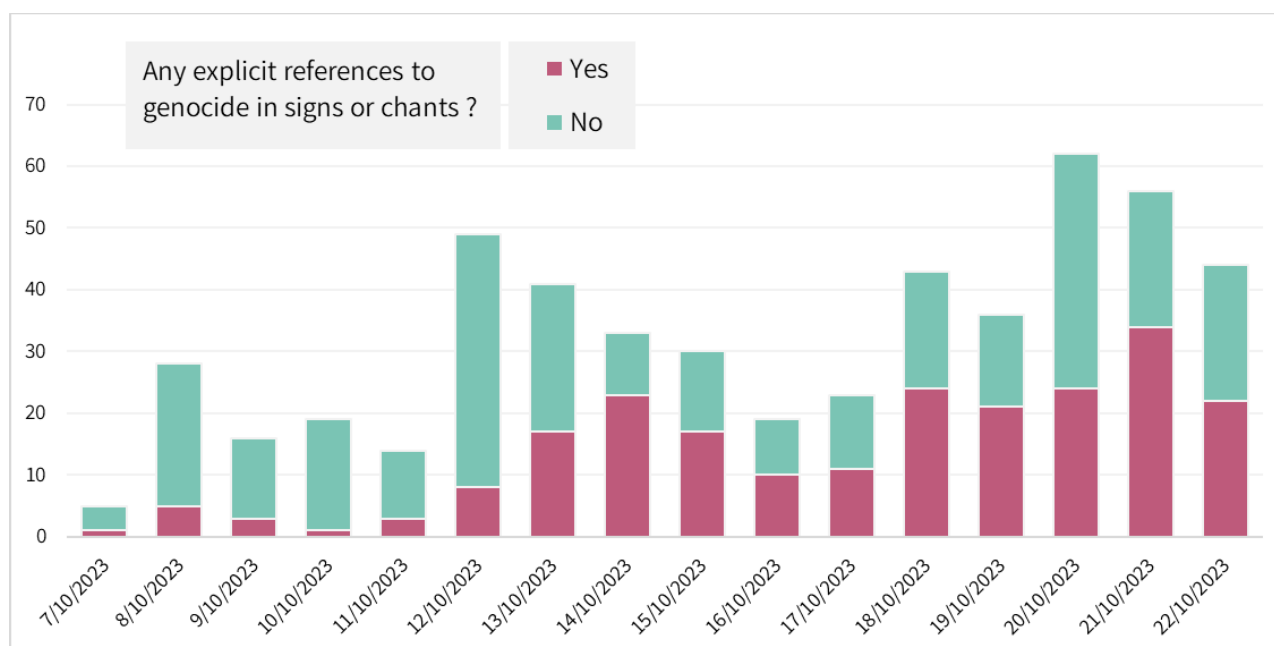
Figure 2: Anti-Israeli incidents in US colleges and universities 2022-2023



Source: Anti-Defamation League, 2023

The following figure depicts the extent of demonstrations that took place in the first few weeks following the October 7 massacre. The fact that even in the first few days of the war, some 30 to 40 demonstrations were recorded, with many of them already proclaiming the false claim of genocide allegedly perpetrated by Israel in Gaza (even before Israeli land forces entered Gaza), may attest to a guiding hand that was prepared in advance for a wide-spread campaign to accompany escalation in the field.

Figure 3: Pro-Palestinian demonstrations in the US by days, 10/07/2023-10/21/2023



Source: processing of Crowd Counting Consortium data by Samuel Neaman Institute,  
<https://ash.harvard.edu/programs/crowd-counting-consortium/>

Table 2: Examples of significant anti-Israeli incidents in US campuses, during April and May 2024

Date / University	Incident Description
<b>04/17-18/2024</b> <b>Columbia University</b>	Columbia University students set up a solidarity encampment on their Manhattan campus. Over 100 pro-Palestinian protesters are arrested after the university president asks New York police to clear the encampment.
<b>04/22/2024</b> <b>Yale University</b>	Police arrests hundreds of people in pro-Palestinian protests in Yale University and New York University. Columbia University cancels classes in response to the encampment on its campus.
<b>04/24/2024</b> <b>Texas University</b>	57 pro-Palestinian protesters are arrested at Texas University for trespassing, in an event considered unprecedented in terms of police handling of the protest. All charges were later dropped for lack of probable cause. Five days later, the number of those arrested in US protests amounts to about 1,000.

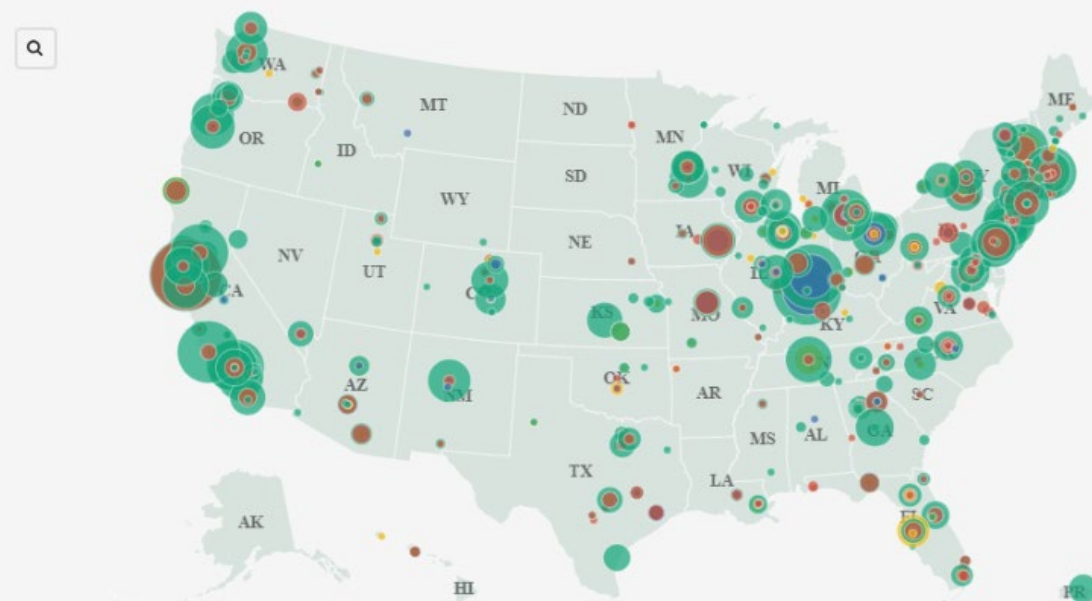
Date / University	Incident Description
<b>04/25/2024</b> <b>Columbia University</b>	Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Mike Johnson, suggests that US military reserve forces should be brought in to restore order at Columbia University.
<b>04/29/2024</b> <b>UCLA</b>	Conflicts between pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli protesters break out. UCLA authorities declare the protest encampment unlawful. Columbia University begins to suspend pro-Palestinian student activists
<b>04/30/2024</b> <b>Brown University</b>	Brown University students agree to remove their encampment in return for university trustees voting in favor of divestment from firms that support Israel. This is the first agreement of its kind.
<b>05/01-02/2024</b> <b>Columbia University</b>	The protest encampment in an academic building on campus is evacuated by New York Police, and dozens of pro-Palestinian protesters are arrested. The UCLA campus encampment is similarly cleared.

Source: [Major events in Pro-Palestinian protests at US universities | Reuters](#)

Figure 4: Anti-Israeli protests in US universities and colleges, 2023-Q3/2024-Q3

## Pro-Palestinian demonstrations and protests in US universities and colleges

■ Q4 23 ■ Q1 24 ■ Q2 24 ■ Q3 24



Source: Crowd Counting Consortium • Data retrieved in September 2024

Source: processing of data from [Where College Protesters Have Been Arrested or Detained - The New York Times](#) ([nytimes.com](#)) by Samuel Neaman Institute

Table 3: Examples of anti-Israeli incidents on campuses in various world countries, during first months of Swords of Iron War

Country	Incident Description
<b>Australia</b>	In April and May 2024, protest encampments were set up in at least seven Australian universities, including University of Queensland and University of Sydney. Protests in Australia did not devolve into violence as seen in the US
<b>UK</b>	<p>Pro-Palestinian protests began in the UK immediately as the war broke out in Gaza, with protest encampments outside of campuses starting in May 2024. Universities with encampments erected beside them include Newcastle, Leeds, Bristol, and Warwick.</p> <p>In the London School of Economics (LSE), pro-Palestinian protesters occupied one of the buildings<sup>50</sup> in May 2024, and were evacuated by the university only a month later<sup>51</sup> following a court order<sup>52</sup>.</p>

<sup>50</sup> [Students occupy London School of Economics building over Gaza \(bbc.com\)](#)

<sup>51</sup> [Students evicted from LSE building after living in pro-Palestinian encampment for over a month | Evening Standard](#)

<sup>52</sup> [LSE granted court order barring pro-Palestine encampments after student protest | Evening Standard](#)

<b>France</b>	In Paris, pro-Palestinian protests erupt at Sciences Po and Sorbonne University at the end of April 2024. In both cases, the halls occupied by the protesters are quickly evacuated by the police.
<b>Canada</b>	At McGill University in downtown Montreal, pro-Palestinian protesters erect an encampment on the front lawn, and remain for a long period. Pro-Palestinian protesters also set up encampments in Toronto University's downtown campus, and in British Columbia University in Vancouver.

Source: [From Australia to the UK: Where pro-Palestinian university protests are happening around the world | CNN](#)

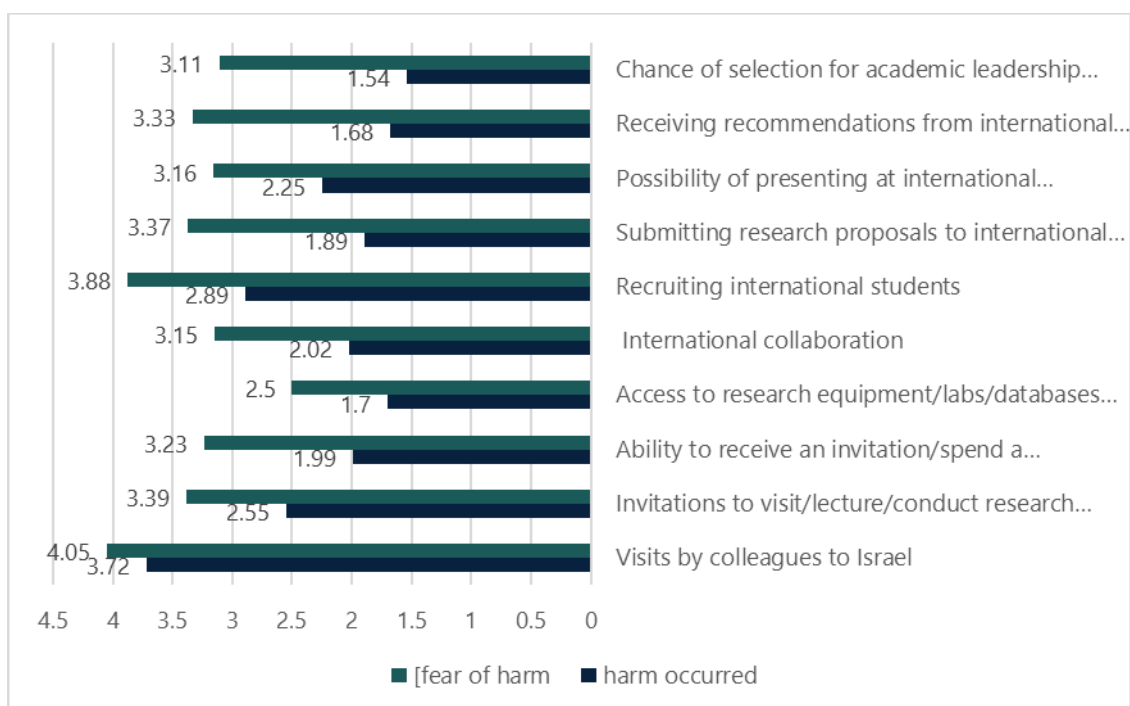
## » Impact on Academic Freedom and Collaborations

The BDS movement has impacted the ability of Israeli researchers to take part in international collaborations. Following the call for an academic boycott, several world researchers and institutions have refused to collaborate with Israeli researchers and research institutions. The volume of student exchanges and research students has decreased, and in certain cases Israeli researchers have found themselves isolated from some of the international scientific community.

In-depth interviews conducted by Shai Farber (Farber, 2024) indicate that these researchers have come across phenomena such as cancellations of conference invitations, refusal to write evaluations for the promotion of young Israeli researchers, rejecting articles (sometimes explicitly declaring that the journal does not accept articles from Israeli researchers, and sometimes without specifying a reason).

A December 2023 survey conducted by the Israel Young Academy in collaboration with Afik in Academia, with 1,015 responses by senior faculty members in universities, revealed that faculty members do not report high levels of actual impact (except pertaining to colleagues visiting Israel), but that they are highly concerned about future impact, as illustrated by the following figure based on survey data (Israel Young Academy & Afik in Academia, 2024).

Figure 5: Reports about existing impact and expected impact by various parameters



Source: Israel Young Academy & Afik in Academia, 2024. Responders assessed impact on a scale of 1 to 5. The length of the lines shows the average impact among responders

## » Impact on Academic Discourse

Actions by BDS supporters following October 7 gave rise to social and political tension, and caused deep rifts and conflicts within academic institutions. The following are three of the most infamous examples of controversial statements from US universities:

- A coalition of student groups from Harvard University published a statement declaring Israel entirely responsible for Hamas's massacre of Israelis, only one day after the event and before any significant countermeasures by Israel.
- Russell Rickford, a historian from Cornell University, expressed his "exhilaration" about Hamas's massacre of men, women, and children. Despite later apologizing following pressure by the university president, his apology pertained to his "choice of words" and not to his support of the massacre.
- The presidents of three leading US academic institutions were called to testify before congress about anti-Jewish rhetoric and activity in their campuses, emphasizing the controversial nature of the academic responses to the events<sup>53</sup>. Their ridiculous attempts

<sup>53</sup> One Israeli response to this event was the public opinion published by the heads of Israeli research universities about the statements by presidents of US universities in congress. [Public Opinion by Head of Israeli Research Universities about Statement made by Presidents of US Universities in Congress | Tel Aviv University \(tau.ac.il\) \(Hebrew\)](#)

to avoid a direct answer to the question of whether calling for a “free Palestine from the river to the sea” constitutes an expression of antisemitism with the excuse that it “depends on context” caused harsh criticism that quickly led to their resignations.

These statements and others have certain impacts on academic discourse, some of which are substantial and long-term:

- Increasing polarization and conflict: statements in academia and the responses to them have increased arguments within academic circles on issues like freedom of speech, academic freedom, and the role of universities in political discourse.
- Impact on methodologies: the events led to a reassessment of the epistemological and ethical assumptions at the basis of academic research, and researchers were called to reconsider the basis of their methodologies. This impact can lead to changes in the way research is conducted in the humanities and social sciences.
- Impact on universities’ response to events: the shameful testimonies of three presidents before congress and their later resignation applied pressure on academic institutions to more effectively handle cases of controversial rhetoric and activism on campus. This pressure has the potential to significantly change the way universities define their role on social and political issues.
- Impact on specific disciplines: controversial statements and actions by academic individuals and institutions have led to a reexamination of the ethical and methodological foundations of Israel studies and of other disciplines that pertain to complex geopolitical issues and to controversial issues such as the limits of free speech (Saposnik, 2024).

The following are several examples of universities and their activities against Israel following the events of October 7 2023:

Table 4: Examples of BDS against Israel by world universities and associations following October 7

Source	BDS activity	University
<a href="#">UC Davis student court overturns divestment resolution   The Times of Israel</a> (February 2024) <sup>54</sup>	Divestment (Overturned by the university's Court of Associated Students)	University of California Davis's student senate
<a href="#">Brown University trustee resigns in protest of school's upcoming Israel divestment vote</a> (September 2024) <sup>55</sup>	Divestment	Brown University (vote to be held in October 2024)
<a href="#">ULB suspends agreements and research projects with Israeli universities</a> (May 2024) <sup>56</sup>	Suspension of agreements and research projects with Israeli universities	Free University of Brussels
<a href="#">Statement: Israel-Gaza conflict</a> (19.10.2023) <sup>57</sup>	Ending Elbit Systems partnership	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Australia
<a href="#">Why five institutions suspended ties with Israeli universities</a> (April 2024) <sup>58</sup>	Suspending ties with Israeli universities	Norwegian Universities: OsloMet, the University of Southeastern Norway, the University of Bergen, the Bergen School of Architecture
<a href="#">University of Barcelona faculty passes motion calling to break academic relations with Israel</a> (May 2024) <sup>59</sup>	Suspending ties with Israeli universities	Spanish universities: Granada and Ovideo, University of Barcelona

<sup>54</sup> [UC Davis student court overturns divestment resolution | The Times of Israel](#)

<sup>55</sup> [Trustees resign from Brown Ivy League over anti-Israel BDS motion - The Jerusalem Post \(jpost.com\)](#)

<sup>56</sup> [ULB suspends agreements and research projects with Israeli universities \(brusselstimes.com\)](#)

<sup>57</sup> [Statement: Israel-Gaza conflict - RMIT University](#)

<sup>58</sup> [Why five institutions suspended ties with Israeli universities \(universityworldnews.com\)](#)

<sup>59</sup> [University of Barcelona faculty passes motion calling to break academic relations with Israel \(elnacional.cat\)](#)



Source	BDS activity	University
<a href="#">Belgium's Ghent university severs ties with three Israeli institutions</a> (May 2024) <sup>60</sup>	Suspending ties with Israeli universities	Ghent university
<a href="#">Trinity students to end protest after college agrees plans to divest from Israeli companies</a> (May, 2024) <sup>61</sup>	Divestment	Trinity College (Ireland)
<a href="#">Italy's University of Turin to exit Israel research pact amid Gaza protests</a> (March 2024) <sup>62</sup>	ban participation in research initiative involving Israel	Turin university (Italy)
<a href="#">AAA Membership Endorses Academic Boycott Resolution</a> (Juli 2023) <sup>63</sup>	Boycotting Israeli academic institutions	American Anthropological Association (AAA)
<a href="#">AAUP Ends Two-Decade Opposition to Academic Boycotts</a> (August 2024) <sup>64</sup>	Recognizing divestments as 'legitimate tactical responses'	American Association of University Professors (AAUP)

It is important to remember that the effect of an academic boycott is not immediate and will only manifest after some time has passed. It will manifest in direct indicators such as research outputs, international scientific standing, etc., and in indirect indicators (that are harder to quantify) like contribution to economy, to national security, and more. It is therefore no wonder that the significance of combating the academic boycott is marginalized in media reports, in Knesset deliberations, and in government resolutions (Golany & Carmi, 2024).

<sup>60</sup> [Belgium's Ghent university severs ties with three Israeli institutions](#) | Reuters

<sup>61</sup> [Trinity students to end protest after college agrees plans to divest from Israeli companies](#) – The Irish Times

<sup>62</sup> [Italy's University of Turin to exit Israel research pact amid Gaza protests](#) | The Times of Israel

<sup>63</sup> [AAA Membership Endorses Academic Boycott Resolution](#) - The American Anthropological Association

<sup>64</sup> [AAUP ends two-decade opposition to academic boycotts](#) (insidehighered.com)

## » BDS outside the US in the first half of 2025

As President Trump took office for the second time in the US, a new stage of handling academic BDS in the US began (see below). Outside the US, however, BDS leaders continued their activity using old and new strategies. The following are several examples by continents/countries:

### Australia

Early 2025 was characterized by continued anti-Israeli events in Australian universities<sup>65</sup>. For example:

Table 5: BDS incidents in Australia in the first half of 2025 – examples

Date	Country	Involved Institute/Entity	Incident Description	Source
<b>January 2025</b>	Australia	Melbourne University	A criminology researcher at the university was investigated after expressing anti-Israeli views in class, calling it “an apartheid state”, and showing difficult videos of IDF actions.	<a href="#">The Australian</a>
<b>March 2025</b>	Australia	Sydney University	The university apologized after mistakenly threatening an international student with expulsion for writing pro-Palestinian messages on classroom boards.	<a href="#">The Guardian</a>

It should be noted that these on-campus incidents are accompanied by other hate incidents in Australia, starting in early 2025, including hate demonstrations, attacks on synagogues, anti-Jewish graffiti, and more<sup>66</sup>.

In response to these incidents, legislation against hate crimes was tightened, with an emphasis on antisemitism<sup>67</sup>. Australian universities had announced that they will adopt the conclusions of the antisemitism report submitted to Australian Parliament, and will

<sup>65</sup> Additional information on instances of antisemitism in Australia is available in Appendix 10.5

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.ynet.co.il/judaism/discourse/article/rk0000pn5iyL>,  
<https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001501909>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/world-news/other/article/17312759>

unilaterally adopt the antisemitism definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)<sup>68</sup>.

## Canada

Anti-Israeli incidents have continued in Canadian campuses even in the first half of 2025. The following are several examples of such incidents:

Table 6: BDS incidents in Canada in the first half of 2025 – examples

Date	Country	Involved Institute/Entity	Incident Description	Source
<b>January 2025</b>	Canada	Concordia University	<p>In late 2024, a giant demonstration was held with about 85K students from Quebec universities such as McGill and Dawson College, demanding to prohibit investment in Israeli companies.</p> <p>Concordia University President, Graham Carr, clarified that the university's position – the boycotts are in opposition of academic freedom – remains unchanged; he censured reports about threatening and racist behavior, and stated that the university will examine the events and encourage victims to complain.</p>	<a href="#">CTV News</a> <a href="#">Concordia University</a>

<sup>68</sup> <https://universitiesaustralia.edu.au/media-item/statement-on-racism/>, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2025/feb/12/inquiry-urges-australian-universities-to-closely-align-with-controversial-definition-of-antisemitism-ntwnfb>

Date	Country	Involved Institute/Entity	Incident Description	Source
<b>January 2025</b>	Canada	McGill University	A group of anti-Israeli activists shattered windows in five McGill University buildings, using stones and hammers, in an attempt to pressure the university into adopting BDS policy. The incident caused alarm on campus and disrupted classes and exams. University President Deep Saini censured the action and clarified that the university will take legal action against those involved.	<a href="#">Jerusalem Post</a>
<b>March-April 2025</b>	Canada	McGill University	The Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) held a special general assembly and approved a proposal for a three-day strike, demanding that the university cut ties with companies connected to Israel and the weapons industry. The proposal passed with a majority of the votes, and the strike was scheduled for April 2-4. The strike included blocking classes and demonstrations around campus. During the strike, reports of vandalism were received, including red paint sprayed on buildings.	<a href="#">McGill Daily</a> <a href="#">Jerusalem Post</a>
<b>May 2025</b>	Canada	Toronto University	Toronto University's faculty association voted in favor of divesting from Israel	<a href="https://www.jpost.com/bds-threat/article-853577">https://www.jpost.com/bds-threat/article-853577</a>

Following the events at McGill University, in April 2025 the University administration announced that it is cancelling the memorandum signed between the University and the students association in response to the strike (source: [McGill Daily](#)).

## Europe

Table 7: BDS incidents in Europe in the first half of 2025 – examples

Date	Country	Involved Institute/Entity	Incident Description	Source
<b>April 2025</b>	Germany	Humboldt University	Pro-Palestinian protesters tried to overtake a university building, while performing acts of vandalism. The protesters were removed from the building by a 300-strong police force. Two foreign citizens who led the riots were deported from Germany.	<a href="#">Deutsche Welle</a> <a href="#">PRESSTV</a>
<b>February 2025</b>	Ireland	Galway University	Pro-Palestinian students protested against the university's collaboration with the Technion because of the Institute of Technology's purported connections with Israeli military.	<a href="#">Irish Independent</a>
<b>March 2025</b>	Ireland	Dublin City University	An Irish student received death threats and had to leave campus after publicly supporting Israel.	<a href="#">Jewish News Syndicate (JNS)</a>
<b>March-April 2025</b>	UK	Manchester University	<p>Anti-Israeli elements within the university's student union sought to approve a letter of support for BDS against Israel, calling for the university to sever all ties with Israel, including termination of research collaborations with Tel Aviv University and student exchange programs with the Hebrew University, as well as divestment from companies connected to Israel.</p> <p>The university had objections to parts of the document, which was submitted for the approval of the student union. Voting was postponed due to pro-Israeli elements arguing that it violates the principle of equality.</p>	<a href="#">Students' Union of Manchester University</a> <a href="#">Mancunio</a>

Date	Country	Involved Institute/Entity	Incident Description	Source
<b>February-March 2025</b>	UK	Cambridge University	In February 2025, the university's request to prohibit on-campus demonstrations pertaining to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for five years was rejected by the court. Subsequently, disorderly conduct by anti-Israeli protesters were recorded, including spilling red paint on one of the historic buildings, and crashing the graduation ceremony. Following these riots, university administration again petitioned the court to prohibit demonstrations, this time for four months only.	<a href="#">BBC</a> <a href="#">The Jewish Chronicle</a> <a href="#">Cambridgeshire live</a>
<b>March 2025</b>	Netherlands	Amsterdam University	The university declared that it is ending its student exchange program with the Hebrew University.	<a href="#">Jerusalem Post</a>
<b>April 2025</b>	Netherlands	Radboud University	The advisory committee for international partnerships advised the university to cut its ties the Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University. Simultaneously, pro-Palestinian protests were developing on campus for the first time since December 2024.	<a href="#">NL Times</a> <a href="#">Radboud University</a>
<b>April 2025</b>	Netherlands	Various universities	Another wave of anti-Israeli protests broke out in universities across the Netherlands, including in Amsterdam University, Nijmegen, Utrecht, Maastricht, Tilburg, and others.	<a href="#">Erasmus magazine</a>
<b>May 2025</b>	Netherlands	Utrecht University	The university announced that it will not enter into new collaborations with Israeli organizations until further notice.	<a href="#">Utrecht University</a>

Date	Country	Involved Institute/Entity	Incident Description	Source
<b>January-March 2025</b>	Belgium	Flemish University and Ghent University	Ending collaborations with Israel and calling to suspend Israel from association agreement	<a href="#">The Brussels Times</a> <a href="#">Belga news agency</a> <a href="#">Belga news agency</a>
<b>March 2025</b>	Spain	Granada University	The Granada Court rejected the appeal submitted by Action and Communication on the Middle East (ACOM) against Granada University (UGR), following the university's decision to suspend academic and scientific collaborations with Israeli institutions.	<a href="#">ground.news</a>
<b>January 2025</b>	Finland	Aalto University	Aalto University's student Union announced its support for the academic and cultural boycott of Israel	<a href="#">Aalto University Student Union</a>
<b>May 2025</b>	Sweden	Uppsala University	Uppsala University's board calls the Swedish government to condemn Israel due to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Gaza	<a href="#">Uppsala University</a>

During the first half of 2025, Israel's foreign relations with western countries significantly deteriorated.

In May 2025, the UK, France, and Canada published an unusual public denouncement of Israel, demanding that it puts an end to the renewed military attack<sup>69</sup>. France announced its intention to recognize the Palestinian Authority as a country in the near future, and the UK announced that it is freezing negotiations with the Israeli government on a new free trade

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<sup>69</sup> Israel's Allies Condemn Expansion of Gaza War. The New York Times, 20.5.2025. [Britain, France and Canada Condemn Israel's Expansion of Gaza War - The New York Times](#)

agreement, and reexamining collaboration with Israel as part of the bilateral road map for 2030<sup>70</sup>.

Simultaneously, academic BDS phenomena were considerably exacerbated in western Europe and Canada. One of the most extreme manifestations of this exacerbation was the call to reexamine the association agreement regulating the relations between Israel and the European Union, by virtue of which Israeli researchers are eligible to participate in European research projects such as Horizon. In late May 2025, the Netherlands' proposal to immediately suspend the association agreement was rejected due to the objection of 10 countries, including Germany and Italy, but a decision was made to review the agreement. Seventeen countries supported a reexamination of the agreement, including France, Spain, Belgium, and the Netherlands<sup>71</sup>.

## Using ethics committees

Ethics committees are nothing new in academia, but since October 7 there have been cases of excessive strictness towards Israeli institutions and researchers, and new ethics entities have even been established to reexamine existing collaborations for “ethical violations”.

One example of this took place in Amsterdam University: after a wave of on-campus student protests in late 2024, the university administration decided to establish a new ethics policy for collaboration with third parties. The administration convened a special advisory committee to examine ties with universities in Israel (as well as in China and Hungary)<sup>72</sup>, to prevent collaborations that contribute to violations of human rights or to improper military use of knowledge. This is the first time the university is presenting an ethical condition of this kind for collaboration with an Israeli institute, after dozens of years of successful collaboration without any issues. Following the advisory committee's recommendation, the university suspended its long-standing student exchange program with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem for reasons such as suspicions of war crimes by Israel (according to UN entities and the International Criminal Court) that the university did not condemn, and the existence of training programs that are integrated with the Israeli defense system – like Talpiot (training

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<sup>70</sup> Oral statement to Parliament: Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: Foreign Secretary statement, 20 May 2025. [Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: Foreign Secretary statement, 20 May 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>71</sup> War in Gaza: How the EU decided to review its Association Agreement with Israel, Le Monde, 21.5.2025. [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2025/05/21/war-in-gaza-how-the-eu-decided-to-review-its-association-agreement-with-israel\\_6741489\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2025/05/21/war-in-gaza-how-the-eu-decided-to-review-its-association-agreement-with-israel_6741489_4.html)

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.uva.nl/en/research/research-environment/third-party-collaborations/collaborating-with-third-parties.html?cb>



defense-technology leadership), Havatzalot (intelligence officer training), and Tzameret for military medicine – thus contributing to military training and research in the IDF.<sup>73,74</sup>

In April 2025, Radboud Universiteit in the Netherlands was officially advised by an advisory committee for international collaborations to freeze all of its collaborations with two Israeli institutions: the Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University. Radboud collaborated with these Israeli universities in research projects and student exchanges, and the committee's recommendation was to suspend them until further notice.

The Advisory Committee for International Collaborations was convened during the 2024-2025 academic year in specific response to public pressure following the war in Gaza. Until then, Radboud Universiteit (and other institutions in the Netherlands) refrained from unilateral boycotts, and instead decided to establish internal mechanisms for ethical examination. The committee's recommendations are a part of Radboud's new policy to assess international collaborations in light of their compliance with human rights values<sup>75</sup>.

The establishment of such committees in Dutch universities like Amsterdam, Radboud, and Tilburg<sup>76</sup> to examine ties with Israel, indicates a comprehensive change in ethical norms that had not existed before.

The case of Antwerp University in Belgium is an important example because of the success of an appeal process, which overturned a boycott resolution. Following student pressure in Belgium in late 2023, Antwerp University instituted a new "human rights test" for all projects in collaborations with Israeli institutions. That same year, the MiHRS committee examined the research collaboration in Horizon Europe's Bridgegap project, participated by the Hebrew University as a collaborator. The committee found that the Hebrew University has "ties with Israeli military training programs", and there is therefore increased risk that the collaborative research will be used in rights violations. The committee indicated several programs: Havatzalot – a collaborative degree program by the Hebrew University and IDF intelligence, Tzameret – a military medicine track in collaboration with the Medical Corps, and Talpiot – a technological development track for the military, as attesting, in the committee's view, to

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<sup>73</sup> Bartov, S. L. (2025, March 18). University of Amsterdam ends student exchange with Hebrew U, saying it's complicit with Israeli military. Jewish Telegraphic Agency. <https://www.jta.org/2025/03/18/global/university-of-amsterdam-ends-student-exchange-with-hebrew-u-saying-its-complicit-with-israeli-military>

<sup>74</sup> NL Times. (2025, March 13). Univ. Amsterdam cuts some ties to Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem, Hungarian institutions. <https://nltimes.nl/2025/03/13/univ-amsterdam-cuts-ties-hebrew-univ-jerusalem-hungarian-institutions>

<sup>75</sup> NL Times. (2025, April 2). Radboud University advised to cut ties with two Israeli institutions. <https://nltimes.nl/2025/04/02/radboud-university-advised-cut-ties-two-israeli-institutions>

<sup>76</sup> Tilburg University. (2024, December 6). Publicatie advies samenwerking academische partners in Israël [Publication of advice on collaboration with academic partners in Israel]. In Samenwerkingen met partners in Israël. <https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/nl/over/bestuur-en-beleid/adviescommissie-samenwerkingsverbanden/samenwerkingen-partners-israel/publicatie-advies-samenwerking-academische-partners-israel>

“direct ties” between the university and the IDF. It therefore believed that the project’s continuation will be in contradiction of the Belgian university’s commitment to research ethics and to prevention of human rights violations. This was the first time that Antwerp University exercised its new “human rights test”, with previous, similar collaborations not blocked. According to Antwerp University’s procedures, the ethics committee’s recommendation is considered “binding”, but the project’s researchers submitted an appeal to the university’s administration. In August 2024, the university board decided to reject the ethics committee’s conclusions and to allow collaboration with the Hebrew University to continue. The management’s explanations (published by retiring rector, Herman Van Geothem) stated that an in-depth examination revealed no evidence of actual risk of human rights violations as part of the project. Van Geothem explained that despite the Hebrew University’s historic ties with military programs, “there are no indications of university involvement in severe and systematic violations of human rights” in the present. It was also mentioned in defense of the Hebrew University that the university itself takes a critical view against Netanyahu’s government, and that isolating it may prove to be counterproductive. This decision contrasted with the trend in several other institutions, illustrating that ethical views may change from one institution to the other<sup>77, 78</sup>.

## 2.7 Legal and ethical issues in the context of the BDS of Israel<sup>79</sup>

Academic BDS is a complex phenomenon with varied expressions – from personal actions by researchers to institution-level policy decisions. Coping with BDS does not start and end with “what can be done”, but also necessitates an examination of the limits of right and wrong, in accordance with legal and moral principles. As far as academic institutions are required to respond to the phenomenon, a distinction is required between pertinent responses and boycotts that are discriminatory, offensive, or contradictory to basic principles of academia and law.

Firstly, we must distinguish between different level of boycotting: personal – when researchers or students choose not to collaborate with Israeli elements; inter-institutional – when academic institutions declare that they will not maintain institutional relations with Israeli universities; intra-institutional limitation – a more severe phenomenon in which an

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<sup>77</sup> Ghent University. (2024). *Discontinuing the collaborations with Israeli academic institutions and government agencies*. <https://www.ugent.be/en/ghentuniv/mission/human-rights/israel-8november2024.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> Zubaşcu, F. (2024, June 27). Kicking Israeli researchers off Horizon projects could ‘amount to discrimination’, says EU Commissioner. Science|Business. <https://sciencebusiness.net/news/horizon-europe/kicking-israeli-researchers-horizon-projects-could-amount-discrimination-says>

<sup>79</sup> The information is based on a lecture by Prof. Barak Medina in a conference about coping with the BDS of Israel. 04/23/2025.

institution forbids its own faculty from collaborating with Israeli researchers, and sometimes even substantiate this stance with formal decisions by ethics committees.

Such cases give rise to the question of whether the boycott violates basic rights like freedom of speech, academic freedom, or the principle of equality, and whether there is legal justification for their inhibition. The more the boycotting is imposed from up high and inhibits the independence of the researchers themselves – the more it is unacceptable from a legal standpoint.

The legitimacy of a boycott is also reviewed in the light of the nature of its cause. Neutral reasons are sometimes offered (such as considerations of security or logistics), but in many cases the boycott is based on distinct political reasons – a protest against government policy, or a demand of Israeli institutions to declare allegiance to international values as a condition for collaboration. Although such a policy may come across as legitimate, it may in fact reflect a double standard. For example, the decision of the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (CRUE) and several Dutch universities not to collaborate with Israeli institutions unless they commit to certain values, introduces a demand that is not applied to other countries.

The boycott can be defined as problematic when it is based on non-academic considerations that do not pertain to the quality or professional content of the collaboration, but stem from political view, affiliation, or identity. Nonetheless, not every act of boycotting is necessarily unacceptable. There may be cases in which refusal to collaborate is based on sound moral reasons, like severe human rights violations, systematic discrimination, or inappropriate conduct by the collaborating institution. The challenge is identifying when the boycott is a legitimate expression of morals and when it is a one-sided political or discriminatory tool.

We may establish a distinction framework consisting of three categories: 1) legitimate moral boycott – based on a clear cause of severe injustice actually performed by the boycotted entity; 2) immoral but legally protected boycott – stemming from a problematic motive (like national identity), but not legally prohibited as part of freedom of speech; 3) twilight zone – cases in which the cause is unequivocal, but the boycott raises ethical or legal questions. Other criteria are also of import.

Criteria that may be used to evaluate a boycott include: cause severity – was there a severe violation or a regular political dispute; direct connection to boycott object – is the boycotted entity directly responsible for any injustice; procedure transparency – was the boycotted entity given the right to respond, is the decision consistent and well-reasoned; extent of impact – is it a personal action or an all-encompassing decision by an entire institution; motive and discrimination – is there a basis for methodical discrimination, or for antisemitism in the guise of criticism.

Response to boycotts can be made in institutional legal arenas, relying on principles defined by the institutions themselves: e.g., demand for due process, discrimination prevention, and protection of academic freedom. Laws of equality and discrimination in the target countries can also be utilized – for instance, the US has federal laws prohibiting discrimination based on nationality, even by universities if they enjoy public funding. In Europe, principles of equality also apply to private institutions. There is therefore cause to argue that boycotting Israeli researchers because of their national affiliation is prohibited discrimination.

Another possible response is depicting the boycott as antisemitic, in cases where it imposes stricter standards on Israel specifically, or when it denies the Jewish people their right to self-determination. The IHRA's international definition of antisemitism provides a suitable infrastructure, and helps discern between legitimate criticism about Israel's policy and between disguised discrimination.

In a reality in which academic institutions operate based on clear, transparent, and uniform standards – such as the ones determined in international treaties – one could expect the ethics committees or human rights committees, which are entrusted with examining the compliance of research proposals with the determined criteria, to act uniformly and not cherry-pick Israeli institutions.

## 2.8 Counteraction Against Academic BDS Since 10/7/2023

### National-level Action

As aforesaid in article 2.5, the wave of antisemitism and calls for BDS in world campuses found Israel with responsibility for the issue scattered across various ministries, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, the Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Technology, and others (Immigration, Absorption, and Diaspora Affairs Committee, 2024).

Actions by several ministries following October 7 included:

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs:** ambassadors and consuls in various countries are working to prevent instances of BDS even before they materialize or to cancel them after action has already been taken. For example, the decision to suspend Israel from the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA), made in the summer of 2024, was

thwarted thanks to efforts by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and officially revoked by a majority of 41 supporters against 20 objectors<sup>80</sup>.

**Ministry of Diaspora Affairs:** acted to shape the discourse about the war by allocating budgets for foundations that support the fight against anti-Israeli organizations on campus, and to expand the definition of antisemitism in US law to also include types of criticism against Israel (Haaretz, 2024).

**Ministry of Science and Technology:** the Ministers Committee on Innovation has approved ILS 90M for the fight against the academic BDS of Israel, and in June 2024 it issued a call for proposals amounting to ILS 10M for universities and research institutions on issues such as legal fight against BDS, conducting scientific conferences in Israel, promoting the international relations of the proposing institution and of Israel, Israel exposure programs for foreign students through weeks-long or months-long visits, and Israel exposure tours for foreign senior researchers and managements of academic institutions (Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Technology, May 2024; Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Technology, June 2024).

## » Action by Academia and Academic Community

The academic community took a wide range of steps to fight the wave of academic BDS events that surged following the October 7 attack. Examples include:

**The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities:** As the war broke out, the Israel Academy, in collaboration with other Israeli entities like the Council for Higher Education's Planning and Budgeting Committee and the Israel Science Foundation, sent letters to presidents of national academies and to leaders of the international academic and scientific community, demanding denunciations of the October 7 attack. Later on, calls were made to counterpart science academies around the world and to international science organizations, and the heads of European academies of science were personally petitioned to oppose antisemitic actions and academic boycotts (Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, n.d.).

- Data by the Israel Science Foundation (ISF), presented in a conference<sup>81</sup>, indicates that so far no dramatic impact has been recorded in the willingness of foreign researchers to participate in the scientific review of Israeli research proposals. There is still a mild decline in international reviewer participation, much like the global trend of erosion in the availability of reviewers, and no sharp deviation is evident that can be directly attributed

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<sup>80</sup> Diplomatic victory by Ministry of Foreign Affairs: thwarted attempt to suspend Israel from International Federation of Medical Students' Association. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 03/03/2025 <https://www.gov.il/he/pages/israel-world-medical-students-association>

<sup>81</sup> Out of a lecture given as part of a conference concerning academic BDS, by Chairman of Israel Science Foundation Prof. Daniel Zajfman.

to BDS. However, within this stable statistical condition a new and worrisome phenomenon arises: a sharp increase in the number of incidents where foreign researchers refuse to review Israeli proposals for explicit political reasons. These letters of refusal, even if they are relatively few, mark a change in the international scientific climate.

- One of the challenges in identifying BDS impacts lies in the phenomenon known as implicit BDS – meaning cases in which researchers entirely fail to respond to review invitations, or give general reasons when the refusal may actually stem from political but undeclared reasons. An analysis by countries reveals a certain correlation between a low rate of general cooperation and the proliferation of politically explicit refusals. It was found that countries with low rates of cooperation are also the origin of many letters of explicit refusal, which may hint that undeclared ideological abstaining also exists. However, due to relatively small numbers and lack of explicit declarations, this is not an unequivocal proof but an indication that requires follow-up.
- An analysis by disciplines indicates differences between fields. In exact sciences and engineering there is a relatively high rate of cooperation on the part of international reviewers, supposedly because of stable professional relationships around issues that are not social-political. In social sciences and life sciences cooperation is a bit lower, but no substantial impact is evident. In the humanities the rate of cooperation is high, yet mostly because of considerable reliance on local Israeli reviewers – making this indicator an inaccurate representative of the global situation. A comprehensive view reveals that even in more ideologically sensitive disciplines, most foreign researchers continue to review Israeli proposals pertinently, distinguishing between political criticism and scientific collaboration.
- The **ISF** makes concentrated efforts to expand scientific collaborations with similar foundations in friendly countries (the first stage includes Switzerland, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Austria) using a “leading agency” model – a collaborative review mechanism that allows Israeli researchers to be involved in international projects, while removing bureaucratic barriers. This initiative has already led to an increase of hundreds of percents in submissions of collaborative research proposals, contributing substantially to strengthening the international ties between Israeli academic institutions and their European counterparts<sup>82</sup>.

**The Association of University Heads (VERA):** the Association published several statements, including a statement about the events on US campuses, and a response to the governing body of the Conference of the Rectors of the Spanish Universities, and others (Association of University Heads, n.d.). VERA had also formed a task force for fighting the academic boycott,

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<sup>82</sup> See Israel-Switzerland collaboration <https://isf.org.il/#/support-channels/51/10> and Israel-Germany collaboration <https://isf.org.il/#/support-channels/56/10>.

engaged in various avenues including recruiting partners for legal proceedings and legal consultants in the main arenas: western Europe, the US, and Canada, and developing tools in the diplomatic, political, legal, and public advocacy levels (Bar Ilan University, 2024).

By early 2025, VERA's task force published two reports, with the second report, updated for February 2025, summarizing the task force's activity in addressing BDS manifestations and academic boycotts in the period following October 7 2024 (VERA, 2025).

The reports map impacts in several academic arenas: institutional and personal collaborations, participation in conferences and lectures, promotion of publications, colleague evaluations, and presence of foreign researchers in Israel. VERA's first report is based on some 300 complaints about academic BDS collected between October 2023 and September 2024, while the second report is based on some 200 complaints collected between November 2024 and February 2025. This indicates an increase of about 66% in the monthly volume of academic BDS reports. A 125% increase was observed in BDS incidents reported in Spain; a 100% increase in incidents reported in the US, Canada, and the Netherlands, and a 55% increase in incidents reported in Belgium and England.

Substantial incidents in the institutional/national level were observed in recent months in Belgium, where all Flemish academic institutions have declared a comprehensive boycott, with similar action taken in the Netherlands. In Switzerland, ongoing discussions about an academic boycott are held in the University of Lausanne. Canada and Australia are experiencing an almost uncontrollable wave of boycotts, in the face of lacking enforceable government regulation and the scarcity of Jewish organizations.

VERA's task force took action against prominent BDS instances, mostly in Europe, India, and in international professional associations. Some cases were handled successfully, while in others the efforts are still ongoing. For the purpose of this activity, a system for continued legal support was established with a law firm, consulting on both wide-scale international events (such as the International Olympiad in Informatics), and on incidental cases against specific European institutions. In addition, the Hebrew University arranged for pro bono legal aid in Canada and the US, available for all universities.

As for the latest trends, the task force reports that even after the cease fire, BDS organizations' motivation has not decreased. While in the previous year, protests were centered mostly around B.A. students and the physical spaces of campuses, they are currently crossing over to more institutional entities – professional academic associations, faculty unions, and advanced degree student unions, like at Berkeley University.

The report also addresses developments in the US political arena, predicting a possible impact of Trump taking office on the academic climate. Upon taking office, presidential orders and declaration were made against progressive voices, the woke movement, and the

connection between the extreme left and Islamist activists. There were preliminary signs of changes in the financial incentives for institutions that boycott Israel, and of softer rhetoric by higher education institutions that emphasize institutional neutrality. Nonetheless, the report warns that increased association of Israel with the US Republican regime may negatively impact academic ties with European institutions, where the academic-political discourse differs than that of the current American government.

**Bashaar Academic Community for Israeli Society:** Bashaar is an apolitical and independent organization founded in 1999, uniting more than 2,000 academic faculty members from all higher education institutions in Israel, including Nobel Prize winners, Israel Prize winners, and former rectors and presidents, all volunteering their time and specialties in academia, science, research, higher education policy, and more, for the benefit of Israeli society. The organization took it upon itself to respond to statements from the world academic community that are lacking a condemnation of the massacre of Israeli citizens, or that attempt to create symmetry between the Hamas attack and Israel's response. The organization also coordinates petitions for signatures by Israeli and global academia, in collaboration with Oct-7-Academics<sup>83</sup> (Bashaar, n.d.). Oct-7-Academics is an initiative by Israeli academics in the humanities and sciences, intended to illuminate and encourage fact-based understanding of Hamas's terrorist attack on Israel on October 7 and of the ongoing war in Gaza, focusing on the academic community<sup>84</sup>.

The following is a list of additional examples of actions against BDS by Israeli academia and the Israeli and international academic community. This is not an exhaustive list.

## » Legislation and Legal Action

- The Pennsylvania Senate passed a bill to ban universities and pension funds from divesting from Israel.

[Pennsylvania Senate passes bill to bar universities and pension funds from divesting from Israel | AP News](#)

- At least 13 federal judges declare they will not accept clerks from Columbia University due to the University's handling of anti-Israel protests.

[Judges' Columbia Clerk Boycott Blasted by New York Bar Group](#)

- US law firm Sullivan & Cromwell, whose clients include Goldman Sachs, Google, and Tesla, announced it will disqualify job applicants who participated in anti-Israel protests.

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<sup>83</sup> <https://www.bashaar.org.il/academia-community/israel-at-war23/>

<sup>84</sup> <https://sites.google.com/view/israelacademia23/home?authuser=0>



[Prestigious law firm Sullivan & Cromwell to screen job applicants for participation in anti-Israel protests | Sky News Australia](#)

## » Action against anti-Israel protests and encampments in world campuses

- Many universities took legal action to evacuate anti-Israel encampments on campus

[What have universities done about anti-Israel encampments?](#)

[Issue Brief: Analysis of U.S. Campus Encampments Related to the Israel-Palestine Conflict | Bridging Divides Initiative](#)

[From protest skits to full-time surveillance, universities and Jewish groups hope to change the campus climate as the school year begins – The Forward](#)

## » Articles and Opinions

- A group of 25 faculty members from Yale University wrote an opinion for Newsweek, positively describing their conclusions from their solidarity visit in Israel

[What We Learned on Our Academic Visit to Israel | Opinion - Newsweek](#)

- Rectors of the 15 Netherlands universities wrote an open letter for Trouw, in which they explain why they do not intend to cut ties with Israeli institutions, despite student protests.

[Universiteiten: 'Wij willen Israëlische wetenschappers niet isoleren' | Trouw](#)

- Prof. Cary Nelson published an opinion on Inside Higher Ed, describing the risks of academic boycotts.

[What is at stake in an academic boycott? \(opinion\)](#)

## » Strengthening Collaborations

- Agreements between Indian and Israeli universities despite the war in Gaza:

[Indian universities build closer ties with Israeli colleges and arms firms despite Gaza war | PressNewsAgency](#)

- Technion's Activity as part of [EuroTech](#): example of collaboration as a tool for addressing academic BDS
- Technion is a test case for the way in which international collaborations can serve as an effective response for academic BDS challenges. The Institute's activity as part of the EuroTech alliance demonstrates how global academic involvement can strengthen the legitimacy of Israeli institutions, reducing pressures for isolation and exclusion.

- Background about EuroTech: the program unites six leading universities in the science and technology fields in Europe. In 2018, the Technion joined the alliance as its sixth member – and the only one located outside of Europe. Nonetheless, it is a full partner in EuroTech's activity and in the European research-funding system, attesting to its profound assimilation in the international scientific community. The program endeavors to strengthen inter-institutional collaborations in teaching, research, and innovation, focusing on five strategic fields: entrepreneurship and innovation, additive manufacturing, artificial intelligence for engineering systems, health and bioengineering, and sustainable society.
- This year, the Technion is also active in the Visiting Researcher Programme – an initiative allowing professors and post-doctoral scholars to visit partner universities for a week to four weeks, receiving up to €1,000 per week for expenses. The visits focus on generating new collaborations, particularly in EuroTech core fields, and proposals are evaluated according to their contribution to developing strategic academic relations – including precedence for projects with an environmental value.
- The program's contribution to addressing BDS: such collaborations are not just scientific, they are accompanied by the establishment of an interpersonal network of relationships, based on mutual respect and trust. They communicate openness, commitment to international discourse, and integration in the global academic system. Visits by Technion researchers in European universities, and the hosting of European researchers in the Technion, create a network of professional and personal relationships. These relationships can then serve as a barrier to trends of alienation, exclusion, or boycotting, by enhancing personal and institutional trust, and reinforcing the sense that the Technion is an integral part of the global academic community.
- In such a way, the Technion's EuroTech activity emphasizes the strategic significance of international scientific collaborations, not only as a research tool but also as a means of blocking BDS initiatives and of constructing partnerships based on discourse, excellence, and mutual trust.

## » Solidarity Tours in Israel

During the months since the war broke out on October 7, many dozens of solidarity delegations visited Israel from various world universities, and especially from the US. Most delegations had a large representation of Jewish faculty members who were looking for a sincere and direct way to express their profound solidarity with Israel and its citizens. They were accompanied by non-Jewish faculty members who felt the earnest need to stand with Israel in its difficult time, and especially to stand with Israeli academia as it was being attacked head-on by the BDS movement. It is important to note the impressive presence of elite

universities (ivy league and others) in the long line of delegations that came to Israel. Their arrival is in complete contradiction to the hostile climate against Israel and the widespread protests against collaboration with Israeli academia that have characterized the universities' campuses in the preceding year. It is also worth mentioning the arrival of delegations from universities of a distinct Christian nature, in which the presence of Jewish faculty members played no role. A **partial** sample of these tours includes:

- A delegation of about 30 faculty members from Yale University visited Israel on March 2024. The delegation visited five Israeli universities, and met with university managements, faculty members, and students.

[In Israel on a solidarity tour, Yale academic premieres October 7 art song cycle](#)

- A delegation of researchers from 25 leading US universities (including Berkeley, MIT, Dartmouth, Stanford, UCLA, UPenn, and Cornell) arrived on a solidarity tour in April 2023, at the height of the wave of pro-Palestinian solidarity in these universities.

[US college delegation inspired by visit to Israel](#)

[US academics from Harvard, Stanford, Dartmouth latest group to make Israel pilgrimage](#)

- A delegation of researchers from UPenn arrived on a solidarity tour in January 2024.

[UPenn faculty solidarity mission receives rock-star reception in Israel](#)

- A delegation of researchers from UCLA arrived on a solidarity tour in February 2024.

[Delegation of UCLA Researchers Visit HUJI](#)

- A delegation of researchers from Columbia University arrived on a solidarity tour in August 2024.

[Columbia delegation visits Israel, but fear repercussions on their return to campus](#)

- A delegation of pro-Israeli Jewish students from several universities such as Columbia, Rutgers, New York University, Western Ontario University, and University of Texas arrived in May 2024 on a solidarity tour that included meeting with senior officials of Israeli government, hearing testimonies of survivors of the October 7 massacre, meeting with representatives of Gaza Envelope communities, meeting with families of kidnapped individuals, and more.

[US university students arrive in Israel as antisemitism rocks campuses](#)

- Tim Griffin, dean of students at the largest Christian university in the US (Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona), visited Israel.

[Dean of Christian mega university visits Israel to push back against boycott efforts](#)

- A group of Christian students from the US visited Israel as part of the Passages program, to volunteer, learn about the complexities of Israel, and express solidarity with the Jewish people following the war in Gaza.

[‘Passages’ Wraps Up Christian ‘Birthright’ Trip to Israel](#)

## » **Founding pro-Israeli groups in academia (partial sample)**

- The founding of Harvard Faculty for Israel by more than 430 faculty members in Harvard University, to support Israeli students and strengthen the academic collaboration between Harvard and Israeli universities.

[Harvard Faculty for Israel Launches With More Than 430 Members](#)

- Founding the Faculty Against Antisemitism Movement (FAAM), an initiative by Academic Engagement Network. A network of academics who act against antisemitism on campus, the organization calls for university leaders to join the fight, demanding the protection of Jewish students and faculty against harassment, discrimination, isolation, or violence.

[Faculty Against Antisemitism](#)

A list of other initiatives in US academia is available on the FAAM website:

[Resources — Faculty Against Antisemitism](#)

- Founding the Accademia-Italia-Israele network that consists of about 200 Italian and Italian-speaking Israeli researchers who have managed to prevent sweeping resolutions to boycott Israeli universities, submitted by students in Italy to Italian university senates.

[Accademia-Italia-Israele – Un network di professori e ricercatori italiani che sostengono Israele, contro il boicottaggio](#)

- Founding the Intra-Communal Professorial Group (ICPG), a network of academics acting to research and fight antisemitism in the UK higher education system and to improve the environment for Jewish students, faculty, qualified personnel, and other staff members. <https://www.icpg.org.uk/>

## » **Petitions and open letters in support of Israel and against academic BDS of Israel (partial sample)**

- A petition by about 3,000 academics from several top universities, including Yale, Columbia, University of Maryland, Stanford, and Northwestern, against the call to boycott Israel.

[3,000 Academics Condemn Israel Boycotts in Universities | United with Israel](#)

[Thousands of Academics Sign Letter Opposing Anti-Israel BDS Movement](#)

- More than 300 UC Berkeley faculty members signed a letter condemning the attacks on Israel at the university.
- 1,200 community members from Princeton University, including students, faculty, alumni, and parents, signed a letter opposing the divestment proposal submitted by the Princeton Israeli Apartheid Divest group.

[Princeton Students, Faculty Push Back on Anti-Israel Divestment Effort](#)

- A petition against the academic boycott of Israel initiated by Dr. Maarten Boudry, former holder of the Etienne Vermeersch Chair of Critical Thinking, Ghent University. Dr. Boudry, along with Prof. Mark Elchardus from the Free University of Brussels, published an open letter against the boycott of Israel on the Quillette website, garnering the signatures of about 50 researchers, mostly from Belgium and the Netherlands.

[United Against the Academic Boycott of Israel](#)

[Open Letter Against the Boycott of Israeli Universities](#)

» **Declarations of public support for the fight against BDS (partial sample)**

- The Chair of Penn University's Board of Trustees expressed explicit objection to the BDS Movement. He stated that the university does not support boycotts, divestments, or sanctions against Israel, and added that he views the BDS movement as anathema to academic freedom, and incompatible with the principles of overlapping consensus.

[Penn Board of Trustees chair criticizes BDS movement, shares goals in new interview](#)

- On the initiative of the GIHF-AI, the digital policy innovation project of ELNET, senior representatives of the German healthcare systems and members of the GIHF-AI Board of directors have signed a letter of support for Israeli healthcare staff. The letter condemns the attacks and expresses support and solidarity with the Israeli people, and specifically with Israeli healthcare staff, who are working under difficult and unconceivable conditions to provide the highest level of medical care.

[German healthcare sector stands in solidarity with Israel - GIHF-AI](#)

» **Cessation of donations to entities that express support for anti-Israeli activity, and donation to entities that support the fight against antisemitism on campuses (partial sample)**

- Harvard University donors, including the Blavatnik family fund, suspended donations to the university following University President Claudine Gay's testimony before Congress.

[Len Blavatnik, a billionaire megadonor, suspends donations to Harvard](#)

Billionaire Harvard donor pulls back donations over President's antisemitism remarks.

- The Zuckerman Fund suspended donations to Columbia University following statements by university president in congressional hearing, which the fund defined as "antithetical to the University's mission".

[Billionaire Mort Zuckerman Cuts Off Millions in Donations to Columbia, Citing Failure To Respond to Anti-Semitism on Campus](#)

- David Magerman, one of Pennsylvania University's major donors, has halted donations to the University following its response to antisemitism on campus. Instead, he decided to donate \$5M to five Israeli universities, for the creation of curricula that will allow English-speaking students to assimilate in Israeli society.

[Spurning alma mater UPenn over response to antisemitism, benefactor pivots to Israel](#)

» **Resignations following Institutional Support for BDS (partial sample)**

- At least 50 professors have resigned from the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York (PSC-CUNY) in protest of the union's decision to support the boycott of Israel.

[Exclusive | CUNY professors quit union in protest over anti-Israel screed](#)

- Joseph Edelman, a Brown University trustee since 2019 and CEO of investment company Perceptive Advisors, resigned in protest over the decision to hold a vote on Israel divestment.

[Brown University trustee resigns over divestment vote](#)

It should be noted that some pro-Palestinian faculty members have also resigned, claiming that the universities are actually leaning towards the Israeli side and are not protecting BDS supporters who are being attacked (so they claim) for their opinions. For example, two senior professors from Harvard University's Divinity School had left citing harassment in February 2025.

[Muslim Professor Resigned from Harvard: “I Am Not Being Protected Against Attacks by Jews”](#)

## » Academic Training Against Antisemitism

- The University of California declared a training program for all new faculty members about antisemitism, anti-Zionism, and the consequences of academic boycott of Israel.

[UC Berkeley to expand antisemitism education to all new students](#)

## » The ADL’s Campus Antisemitism Report Card 2.0

In 2024, The Anti Defamation League (ADL) published its Campus Antisemitism Report Card 2.0, rating 135 academic institutions in the US according to 30 criteria in three categories: administrative policy, Jewish life on campus, and behavior and climate.

The report focuses particularly on severe antisemitic incidents that took place between April and December 2024, and emphasizes gaps between official policy and actual implementation. Its objective is to provide an up-to-date snapshot and to encourage higher education institutions to improve their response to antisemitic phenomena. The report was a success, with many universities announcing their intention to improve and elevate their score, and quite a few already recorded substantial improvements<sup>85</sup>.

## » Changes in US Government Conduct Since January 2025

Since entering his second term on January 20 2025, President Donald Trump has continued to promote a pro-Israeli policy. His policy, combining presidential orders, changes in education policy, and a focus on inhibiting pro-Palestinian activity, had an impact on BDS dynamics but did not block them entirely. The following is a detailed analysis of changes using sources and examples, including data from a 2024 The Guardian article and up-to-date sources.

As previously described, academic boycotts against Israel are a part of the BDS movement, calling academic institutions, students and faculty in the US to refrain from collaborating with Israeli institutions in protest of Israel’s policy against the Palestinians. President Trump, a known supporter of Israel, took action in his first term as president (2017-2021) against these movements, including a December 2019 presidential order defining even certain types of criticism against Israel as antisemitic, and threatening cessation of federal funding for

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<sup>85</sup> <https://www.adl.org/campus-antisemitism-report-card>

universities that do not take a stand against antisemitism<sup>86</sup>. In his current presidential term, Trump has continued this approach, with an emphasis on suppressing pro-Palestinian activity on campuses.

On January 30 2025, Trump signed a new presidential order intended to fight antisemitism, which included a threat to cancel the visas of foreign students who participate in pro-Palestinian protests, as part of a wider effort to protect Jewish rights and to suppress activity Trump considers as pro-terrorist. The order, published on that same day, promised “immediate action” by the Ministry of Justice to punish terrorist threats, vandalism, and violence against Jewish Americans, and also included a commitment to deport Hamas supporters and cancel the student visas of “Hamas supporters” on campuses. Other reports, such as an NPR article dated March 3 2025<sup>87</sup>, stated that foreign students are concerned about such action, and fear an over-broad interpretation of the definition “BDS support”, which may also include demonstrations by human rights organizations and calls for divestment. In fact, the government has already gone beyond threats, with some arrests already reported. Several foreign students have been arrested following participation in such protests, and some of them are in the process of having their visas revoked<sup>88</sup>. These processes are still ongoing and have not been completed to date.

It seems that Trump’s policy, which included threats of reducing federal funding and revoking visas, created an atmosphere in which US academic institutions are more careful of publicly supporting BDS against Israel. For instance, Columbia University has suspended the activity of student groups that support BDS following threats to its budget<sup>89</sup>. Nonetheless, in early May 2025, an exceptional incident took place on campus: more than 100 pro-Palestinian students, some masked and wearing keffiyehs, barged into the central library building, hung Palestinian flags, chanted anti-Israeli slogans, and vandalized property. The incident led to the arrest of about 80 protesters and the injury of two security guards. The university’s spokesperson stated that this was a gross violation of campus conduct rules, and that disciplinary action will be taken against all those involved<sup>90</sup>.

In his second term, Trump is continuing to promote a policy designed to prevent academic BDS against Israel, mostly by imposing financial pressures and suppressing pro-Palestinian

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<sup>86</sup> [Trump signs order against boycotts on college campuses directed against Israel | PBS News](#)

<sup>87</sup> [Foreign students say the threat of Trump's executive orders is getting real - NPR](#).

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/06/nx-s1-5281179/trump-executive-order-aims-to-deport-international-students-who-have-protested-israel>  
[Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Takes Forceful and Unprecedented Steps to Combat Anti-Semitism – The White House](#)  
<https://time.com/7284578/judge-orders-release-of-rumeysa-ozturk-tuft-student-detained-by-ice/>

<sup>89</sup> <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/h1mazcg2yg>

<sup>90</sup> [https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syot2cfxee#google\\_vignette](https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syot2cfxee#google_vignette)



activity on campuses. Nonetheless, academic boycotts are continuing to spread – both in the US and globally. For instance, Radboud University in the Netherlands is considering suspending collaborations with Israeli universities, such as the Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University, citing human rights violations in Gaza and in the Palestinian Territories<sup>91</sup>. Such cases illustrate the limited impact of American policy on academic institutions beyond the US, which are not subject to the same pressures. Moreover, the BDS movement’s difficulty to operate within the US may drive it to concentrate its efforts elsewhere – like Europe and Australia – where it enjoys more freedom to act and more widespread public support.

## 2.9 A review of active organizations in BDS, specifically in the academic arena

The BDS movement, founded in 2005 by Palestinian civil society organization, has gained substantial attention in university campuses throughout the US and Europe. This Chapter will examine the evolution of their activities in higher education institutions, focusing on the October 2023 turning point. Until that point in time, activity had been characterized by long-term and goal-oriented strategies, yet it later became more immediate, emotional, and intense.

### Historic background

The emergence of pro-Palestinian activity on campuses can be dated back to 1960s, alongside the rise of student protest movements against the Vietnam War. Organizations such as Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), founded in the early 2000s, were a substantial catalyst for increase in activity. The events of October 2023 triggered a change in the patterns of pro-Palestinian activity, and have caused considerable escalation in both scope and impact of BDS activities in academic institutions.

In addition to SJP, other anti-Zionist groups in universities were significant in organizing anti-Israeli protests since October 7, and in calling for encampments on campuses. These include local branches of American Muslims for Palestine (AMP), Dissenters, Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), Palestine Action, Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), Samidoun, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA), and others<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup> [Advise International Partnerships | Radboud University](#)

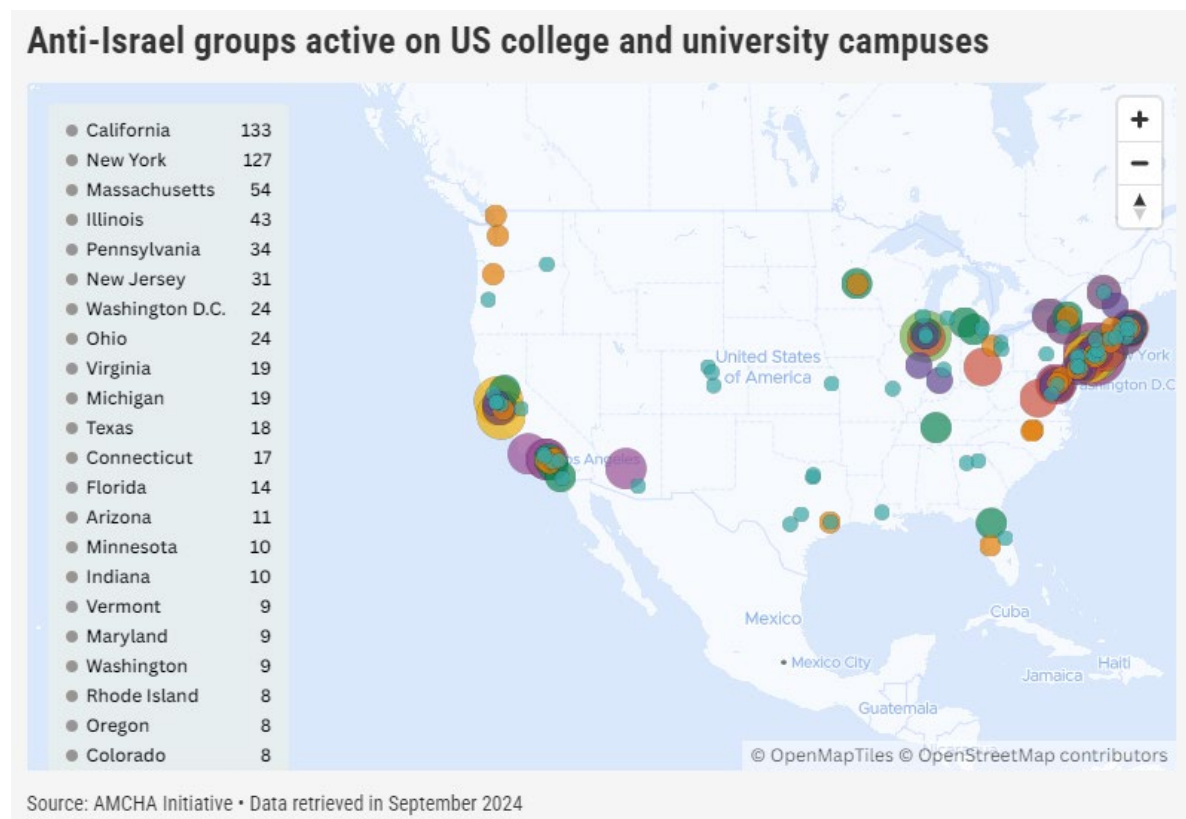
<sup>92</sup> Campus Antisemitism Surges Amid Encampments and Related Protests at Columbia and Other U.S. Colleges. ADL. April 2024 [\[source\]](#)

## Mapping pro-Palestinian Organizations on Campuses

BDS organizations have established a presence on US campuses, mainly by student-led groups. Data by AMCHA<sup>93</sup> (September 2024) identifies 870 organizations in 328 campuses, of which 691 organizations are active in 277 different campuses.

Figure 6 depicts the geographic distribution of US organization; the numbers on the map represent the number of organizations in each state. Columbia University tops the list with 18 active organizations.

Figure 6: Geographic distribution of anti-Zionist organizations active on US campuses

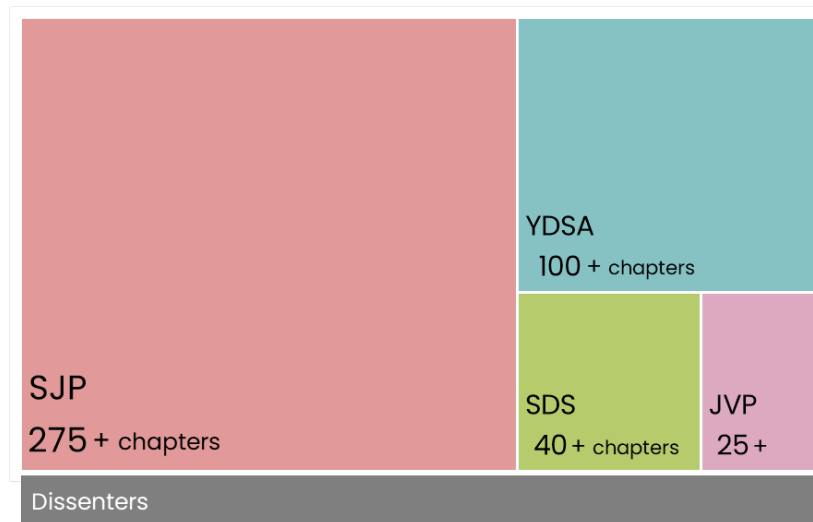


An interactive view of this map is available at [Samuel Neaman Institute Website](https://www.samuelneamaninstitute.org/)

<sup>93</sup> AMCHA Initiative | Anti-Zionist campus groups [[source](#)]

A September 2024 report<sup>94</sup> published by the ADL classified the organizations active on campuses according to the groups specified in Figure 7:

Figure 7: Distribution of organizations on US campuses by ADL classification<sup>94</sup>



#### » SJP | Students for Justice in Palestine

SJP is a network of anti-Israel student groups on US university campuses, which justifies terrorist attacks on Israel, and especially the October 7 attack. Organization members engage in antisemitic rhetoric and propaganda, and lead campaigns for boycott, divestment, sanctions, and anti-Israeli protests on campuses. SJP was a key player in organizing student encampments in US universities and colleges in the spring and summer of 2024.

In addition, professors and educators throughout the US have launched the national network Faculty for Justice in Palestine (FJP) in response to Israel's actions following the October 7 terrorist attack, and to issues they claim to have seen on campuses. The network has branches in more than 120 colleges and universities, and attempts to empower activism by anti-Israeli organizations on campuses, and to provide guidance for faculty members and students who feel they were unjustly punished for activism. FJP supports BDS and assisted in organizing encampments in the spring of 2024.

#### » JVP | Jewish Voice for Peace

A radical anti-Israeli activist organization operating on campuses and in other communities. The group's academic branches closely collaborate with SJP in organizing anti-Israeli activity on campuses. JVP supports erasing Zionism and relations with Israel from the lives of Jews

<sup>94</sup> Anti-Israel Activism on U.S. Campuses, 2023-2024. ADL. September 2024 [\[source\]](#)

worldwide. The group considers Zionism a racist movement and a form of “Jewish supremacy”.

### » **SDS | Students for Democratic Society**

Relaunched in 2006 in response to the US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, the organization is the successor of the eponymous organization founded in the 1960s, which included prominent Jewish and anti-Zionist groups. SDS members participated in the planning and set up of encampments and other protests. In certain cases where the activity of SJP branches was temporarily banned, SDS functioned as one of the main Palestine solidarity groups on campus.

### » **YDSA | Young Democratic Socialists of America**

YDSA is the youth and student section of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). It focuses on establishing the student movement through worker unions, with the Palestinian issue and anti-Israeli activity constituting a central pillar of the group’s activity. Campus branches have participated in organizing protests, encampments, and trainings, and have established coalitions with other anti-Israeli groups, and especially with SJP.

### » **Dissenters**

The organization defines itself as “a new national movement leading our generation to reclaim our resources from the war industry, reinvest in life-giving services, and repair collaborative relationships with the earth and people around the world”. Officially launched in January 2020, it has quickly grown and added new branches across the US.

One of its main campaigns was Divest from Death, calling for universities and colleges to withdraw their investments from companies such as Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and others, because they “fuel violence with billions of dollars of weapons manufacturing to arm violent regimes in the Philippines, in Israel, and to local police departments across the US”. The group is a main co-organizer of anti-Israeli events on campuses.

A research<sup>95</sup> published by AMCHA Initiative in September 2024 reports a steep increase in the number of organization like FJP that were founded following the October 7 events in response to calls by the PACBI<sup>96</sup>, which is a founding member of the BNC movement<sup>97</sup> and is in charge of overseeing the academic and cultural boycott aspects of BDS. AMCHA’s research team

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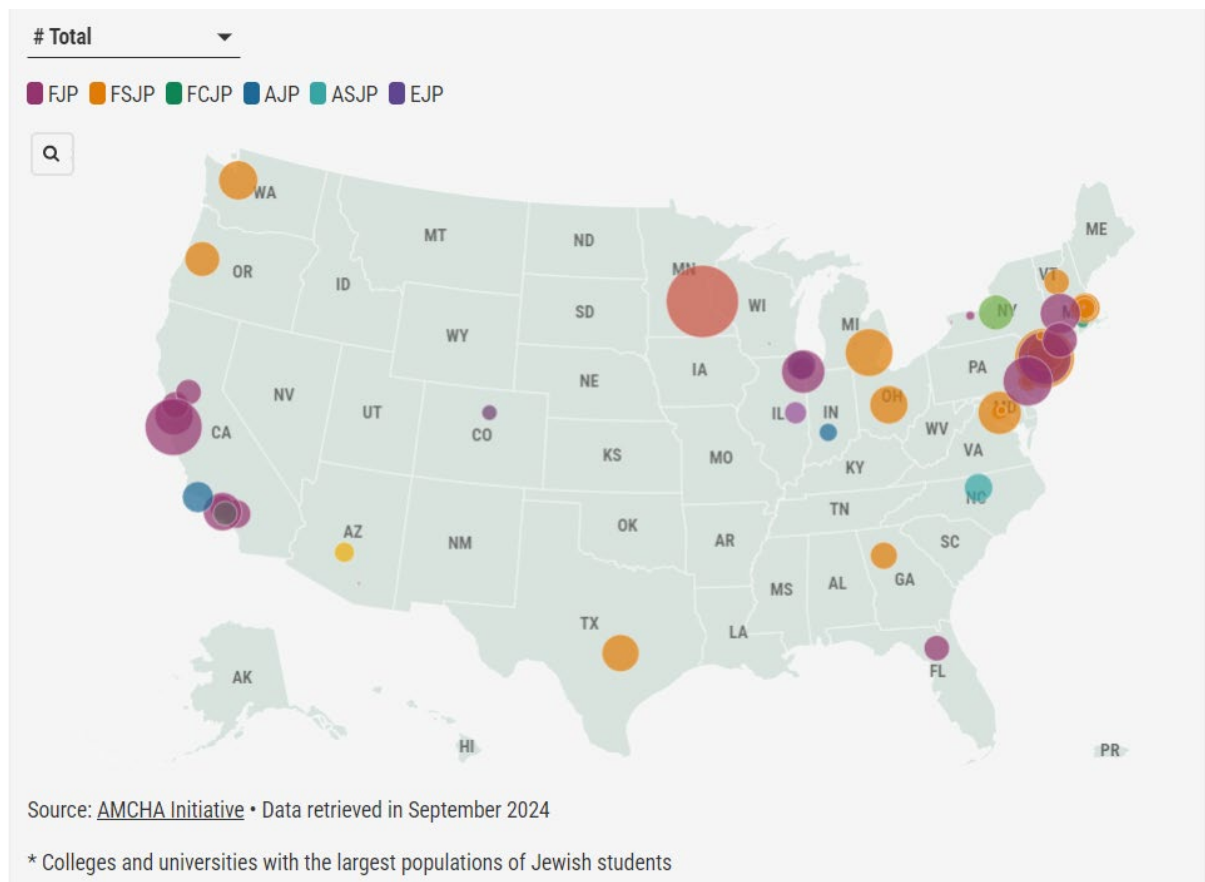
<sup>95</sup> How a Faculty Network Fuels Campus Unrest & Antisemitic Violence. AMCHA Initiative. September 2024 [\[source\]](#)

<sup>96</sup> PACBI: Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel [\[website\]](#)

<sup>97</sup> BNC: BDS National Committee

reviewed 103 colleges and universities in the US with large populations of Jewish students, and have found that 57 of them had presence of the FJP, which played a significant role in leading the wave of antisemitism in academia. These campuses saw a 7.3-times increase in the probability of physical attacks on Jewish students, and a 3.4-times higher probability of death threats and other violent threats (compared to campuses without FJP presence). Activity of FJP branches is also correlated with continued presence of protests and encampments, and with BDS resolutions being passed on campuses. The researchers wrote: “the rise of FJP chapters represents a dangerous new front in the battle against campus antisemitism. Faculty members, empowered by the BDS movement, are using their academic positions to organize against Israel and promote antisemitism (often disguised as anti-Zionism) on a scale we have never before witnessed.”

Figure 8: Activity of FJP chapters on select US campuses\*



**FJP:** Faculty for Justice in Palestine [] **FSJP:** Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine [] **FCJP:** Faculty Coalition for Justice in Palestine [] **AJP:** Academics for Justice in Palestine || **ASJP:** Academics and Staff for Justice in Palestine [] **EJP:** Educators for Justice in Palestine [] **FLAGSJP:** Faculty, Librarians, Alumni, Graduate Students & Staff for Justice in Palestine

An interactive view of this map is available at [Samuel Neaman Institute Website](#)

Campus student cells are connected to the wider Palestinian solidarity movement through various organizations, such as American Muslims for Palestine (AMP), the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), and Palestine Legal, which provide funding, training, legal aid, and other types of support<sup>98</sup>.

Some of the groups use resources of official student bodies, which are usually funded by student fees, in combination with crowd funding. Organizations like YDSA charge member fees and also receive financial support from the parent organization. Some receive external funding from private donors and independent funds. According to ADL data<sup>94</sup>, in 2023 JVP

<sup>98</sup> Who is Funding U.S. Anti-Israel Groups?. ADL. September 2024 [[source](#)]

received \$150K from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, \$500K from Lannan Foundation, and \$214,060 from Schwab Charitable.

### **Characteristics and Trends of the New Organizations**

An analysis of the new organizations founded after October 2023 indicates several prominent trends and characteristics:

- Focusing on specific issues: unlike the older organizations that engage in a wide variety of concerns, the new organizations tend to focus on specific issues (such as humanitarian aid or academic freedom).
- Organizational diversification: the proliferation of different types of organizations enables them to appeal to a wide variety of audiences, and garner support from different sectors of the academic community.
- Increased use of technology: the new organizations exhibit a more intensive use of digital platforms and social media to promote messages and recruit activists.
- Multidisciplinary approach: a trend of combining academic, political, and media activity, reflecting the increasing complexity of the conflict.
- International networks: an increasing trend of collaboration between organizations from different campuses and different countries, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and strategies.
- Integration with other social movements: pro-Palestinian organizations are increasing their collaboration with other movements such as Black Lives Matter and climate justice movements, thus expanding their support base.
- Pragmatic approach: some of the new organizations, like CIPDF, present a more pragmatic approach that integrates pro-Palestinian positions with attempts for dialogue.

### **Impacts and Consequences**

The emergence of new organizations presents new challenges and possibilities:

- Challenges for academic institutions: institutions are required to cope with new demands and pressures, while maintaining balance and objectivity.
- Impact on public discourse: the new organizations introduce different narratives and points of view to public discourse on campuses.

It is important to note that these developments are part of a complex and ongoing geopolitical situation, and their long-term consequences are not yet fully understood.

## Summary

The BDS movement on academic campuses is aggressively operating in hundreds of universities and colleges. It manages to influence resolutions by student bodies against Israel, particularly in cases where their efforts coincide with wider progressive agendas. Growing support for BDS among students indicates that anti-Israel sentiments on campus are apparently influencing voter positions in the younger age groups.<sup>99</sup>

Nonetheless, the ability of the BDS movement to affect policy change towards Israel among the universities' governing bodies is still dubitable. When student bodies do manage to pass decisions against Israel, they are often faced with many obstacles by the directors of the academic institutions and with public objections.

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<sup>99</sup> Oxnevad, I. (2023). The Company They Keep: Organizational and Economic Dynamics of the BDS Movement. National Association of Scholars.

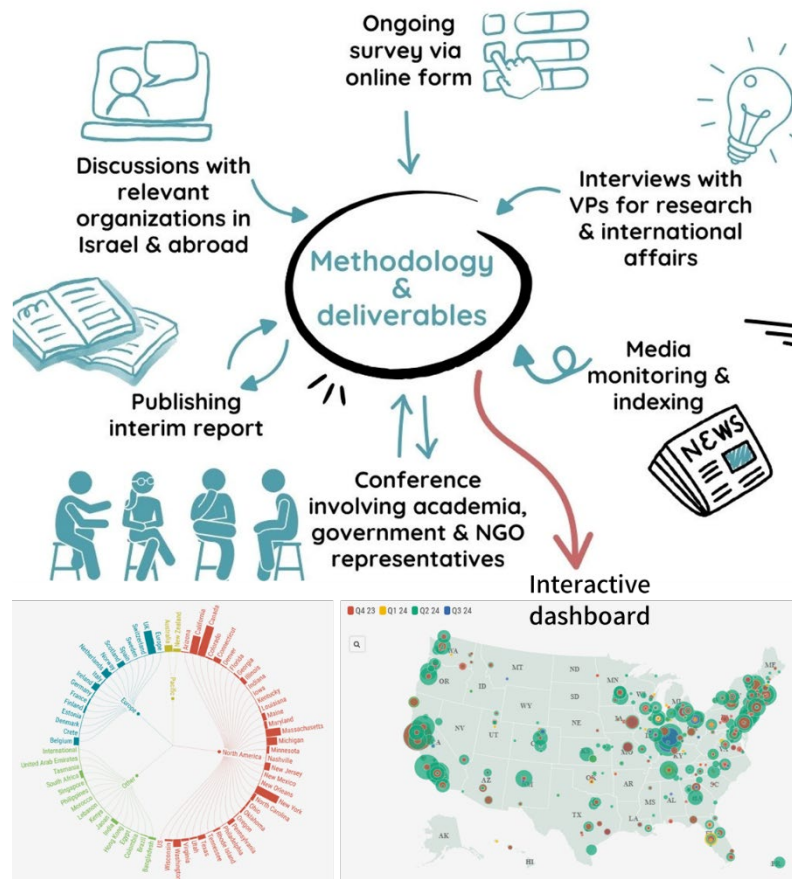


## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 The Project Team's Work Method

The research team worked methodically in a structured manner throughout the entire project period. This included regular weekly meetings to discuss progress and plan the next steps. At the end of each meeting, personal tasks were assigned to each team member, to report on their execution in the following meeting. The team cooperated regularly and closely with the Association of University Heads (VERA), The Board of Public Academic Colleges, and other relevant entities. Platforms such as the Academia network and the Bashaar portal were used to disseminate information to academic faculty members. The team also acted to increase public awareness to its activity, in an attempt to increase reports using the reporting form, and to provide updates and recommendations for action and response to academic boycott instances. This was achieved by newspaper publications and articles, participating in podcasts, initiating relationships and partnerships with entities who deal with these issues, and maintaining an active presence in social media.

The following figure succinctly depicts the main research methods employed during the research:



## 3.2 Data Collection

### In-depth Interviews

As part of data collection, interviews were held with seven international affairs VPs and four research VPs from various universities. The purpose was to collect data and impressions about the impact of academic boycotts on the university so far.

Among other questions, VPs were asked about the impact of academic boycotts on research, collaboration agreements, student and researcher mobility, and about their projected future impacts. Insights and conclusions from these interviews are presented in the following Findings Chapter.

For the list of interviewed VPs see Article 0 in the Appendixes.

### Form for Reporting an Academic BDS Incident

Following the interviews with university VPs and based on the accumulated knowledge, the project team developed a form for reporting an academic boycott incident (for the full form see Appendix 10.3)

#### » Form Purpose

Collecting data on incidents of academic boycott over time, to analyze the phenomenon and draw conclusions.

#### » Form Construction

The form was built in the Lime Survey application in Hebrew and English

#### » Form Dissemination

The form was disseminated in several rounds and ways, including through VERA and the Board of Public Academic Colleges, via VPs of international affairs in the universities, the Samuel Neaman Institute website and social media profiles, the Academia and Bashaar networks, platforms of the medical community, newspaper publications, and more.

#### » Questionnaire Description

The questionnaire consisted of four sections:

**Reporter details:** current academic affiliation (university, college, or other), name of university/college, discipline, academic rank.

**Incident details:** does the incident pertain to research or to teaching or student activity, what type of research (basic/applied/clinical/other) or activity, event arena and category, country where the incident occurred, institution/organization in which the incident occurred, date on which the event was identified, BDS explicit or implicit, level of impact on promotion or research, is there a specific person that can be identified as the incident leader.

**Addressing that incident in particular and BDS incidents in general:** was there an independent attempt to address the incident and how, is there expectation of assistance from the institution or any authority and which assistance, any suggestions on how to address academic BDS incidents.

**Authorization to transfer the report** to a third party for informative purposes and/or to assess the possibility of assistance.

## Data from Universities

In parallel to the data collection process at Samuel Neaman Institute, the universities themselves also collected data and transferred it to VERA.

VERA anonymized and transferred this data (some 300 BDS incidents) to Samuel Neaman Institute, and the project team assimilated it into its database, which already contained the reports from the Institute's reporting form.

Note that the universities' data did not completely match the types of data collected by the project team via the reporting forms, and therefore necessitated processes of harmonization (uniformizing names of universities, countries, scientific disciplines, etc.) and of mapping (attributing an arena and category based on incident description, etc.).

The data received from the universities form the lion's share of the database, but it lacks information about issues such as level of impact, suggestions for addressing BDS, and more.

## Constructing a Secure Database and Dashboard

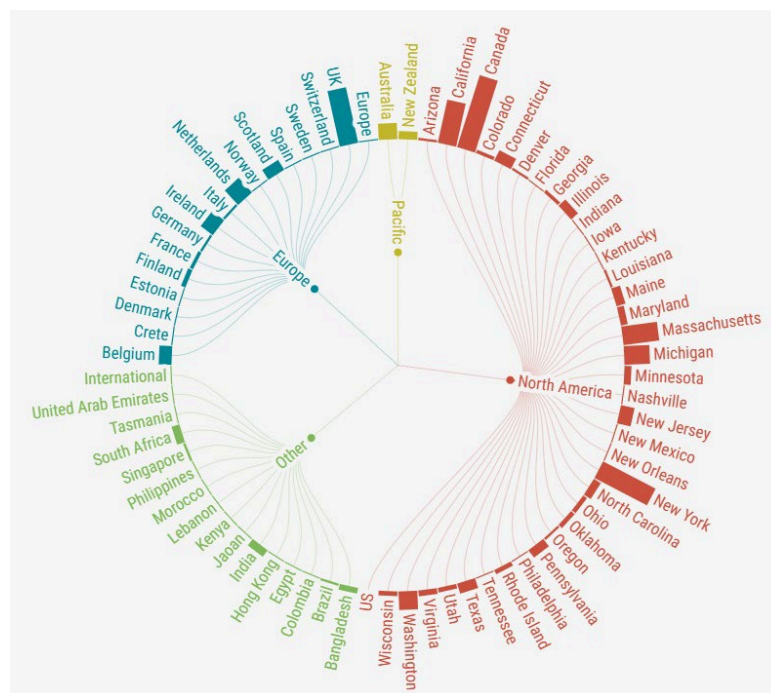
The project makes use of advanced systems for the collection, processing, and presentation of data, while adhering to strict information security standards. The dashboard is based on Power-BI and allows analysis and visual presentation of information, assisting in data-based decision making (see Appendix 9.4).

## Data Mining in the Digital Space

Our method of data collection is based on a daily-update mechanism, using Google Alerts with key words that were defined by the research team. The collection method included filtering and analyzing varied information sources, including global media outlets, local press, academic journals, blogs, and others<sup>100</sup>. Following a sorting process, including removal of redundancies<sup>101</sup> and irrelevant results, the team recorded 1,255 publications about BDS written in the past year (since research started in June 2024) – an average of 105 items per month. Of these, 525 were reports of BDS incidents, which were classified according to the categorization system developed for this research<sup>102</sup>. The team also recorded 251 indications of counteraction against BDS (legal and legislative means, implementation of disciplinary proceedings, inquiries, institutional statements, and more), and 730 various opinions and articles on the issue.

The following figures depict the classifications of the 525 incidents reported in the examined period<sup>103</sup>. About two thirds of the items reported BDS incidents that occurred in the US and Canada, and a fifth of the incidents – in Europe (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Geographic distribution of items about academic BDS



<sup>100</sup> Note that the collection process focused on sources that publish mainly in English and Hebrew, which may skew representation in favor of English-speaking countries.

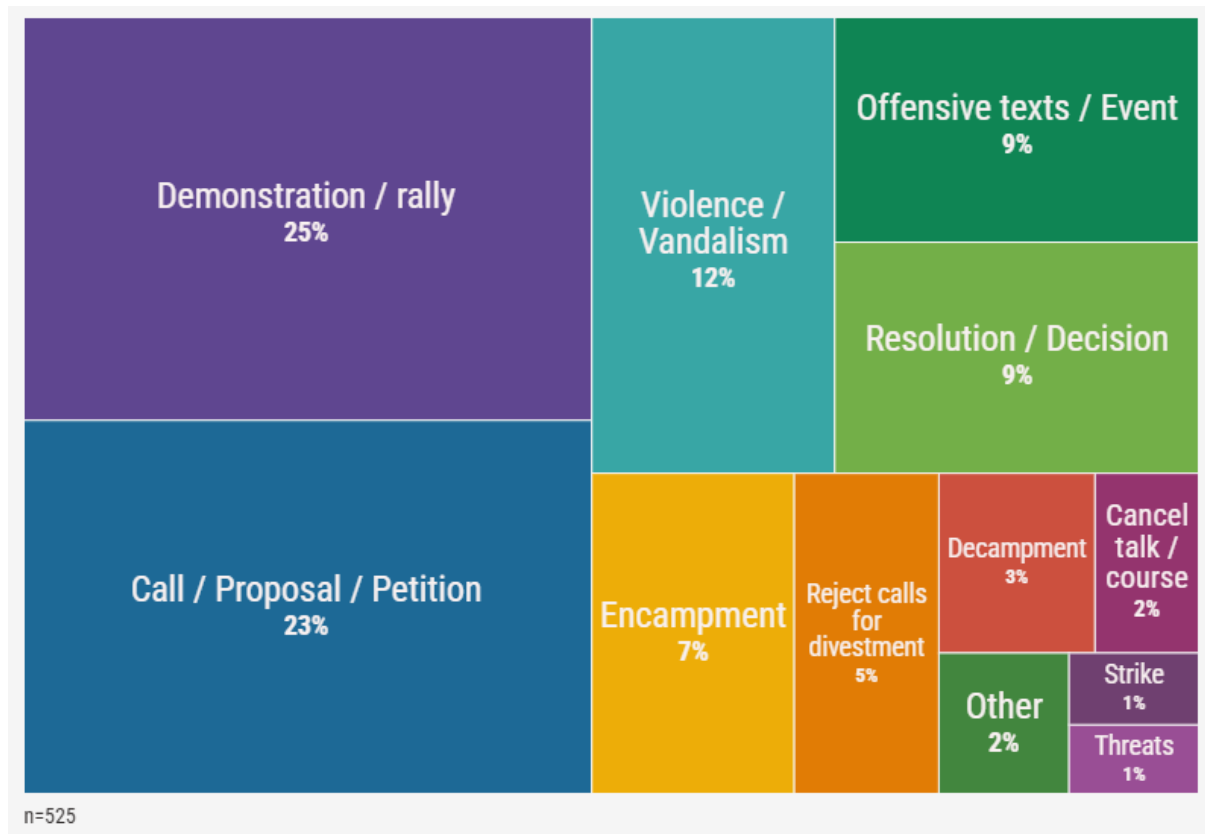
<sup>101</sup> Interesting to note that some redundancies stemmed from differences in the manner of reporting about the same incidents in Jewish and in pro-Palestinian sources.

<sup>102</sup> Data was classified by date, continent, country, academic institution, incident type (protest, encampment, violence, etc).

<sup>103</sup> True to the date of writing this chapter, 05/12/2025.

Media coverage of academic BDS incidents reflects a complex social-political arena. About a quarter of all items covered protests on campuses, 23% reported calls and petitions for academic BDS, 12% covered incidents of violence or vandalism, 9% reported disruption of events and offensive expressions, and 7% reported on campus encampments. The following figure shows the distribution of incident types recorded:

Figure 10: Item distribution by incident type



A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the collected data presents the extent and frequency of reports about academic BDS, focusing on main arenas of activity like the US, Canada, and Europe. The data reflects the digital space's evolution into the main arena of documenting, exposing, and processing BDS incidents and the responses to them, illustrating the socio-political complexity of the phenomenon in the academic world. The findings are displayed in an interactive dashboard available on the [Project Page](#) on the Samuel Neaman Institute website.

To study the impact of the international attitude towards Israeli academia, a comprehensive follow-up study will be conducted based on advanced data mining and natural language processing (NLP) algorithms. The study will focus on analyzing content from global leading news websites, mapping and analyzing items about the attitude towards Israeli academia. We

will use sentiment-analysis tools to characterize the references – positive, negative, or neutral – and to identify main trends like reducing or expanding academic collaboration, calls for BDS or new initiatives to strengthen relations. The study term will stretch over a long period of time, from several years before the Sword of Iron War to the end of the study term. This will allow us to analyze changes in the image of Israeli academia over time, while examining the direct and indirect impacts of national-security events on the public and political discourse.

On Tuesday, April 23 2025, on the eve of Israeli Holocaust Remembrance Day, Samuel Neaman Institute held a conference dedicated to **addressing Academic BDS**. The conference was held as part of activity by the research team which was established for this purpose at the Institute. It was attended by senior officials from universities and colleges, representatives of the Israel Science Foundation, jurists, researchers, and associations that work in the global arena. The agenda included opening statements, a review of data and relevant activities by the Samuel Neaman Institute, an in-depth lecture about the legal limitations to BDS, as well as two panels concerning how Israeli academic institutions are handling BDS and the activity of civil society associations against the BDS phenomenon. Participant statements were recorded and transcribed, and some were incorporated in this report as a qualitative infrastructure that reinforces the survey findings. The full program and names of lecturers are available on the Samuel Neaman Institute's website [Scholar Shield](https://www.neaman.org.il/en/), <https://www.neaman.org.il/en/>.

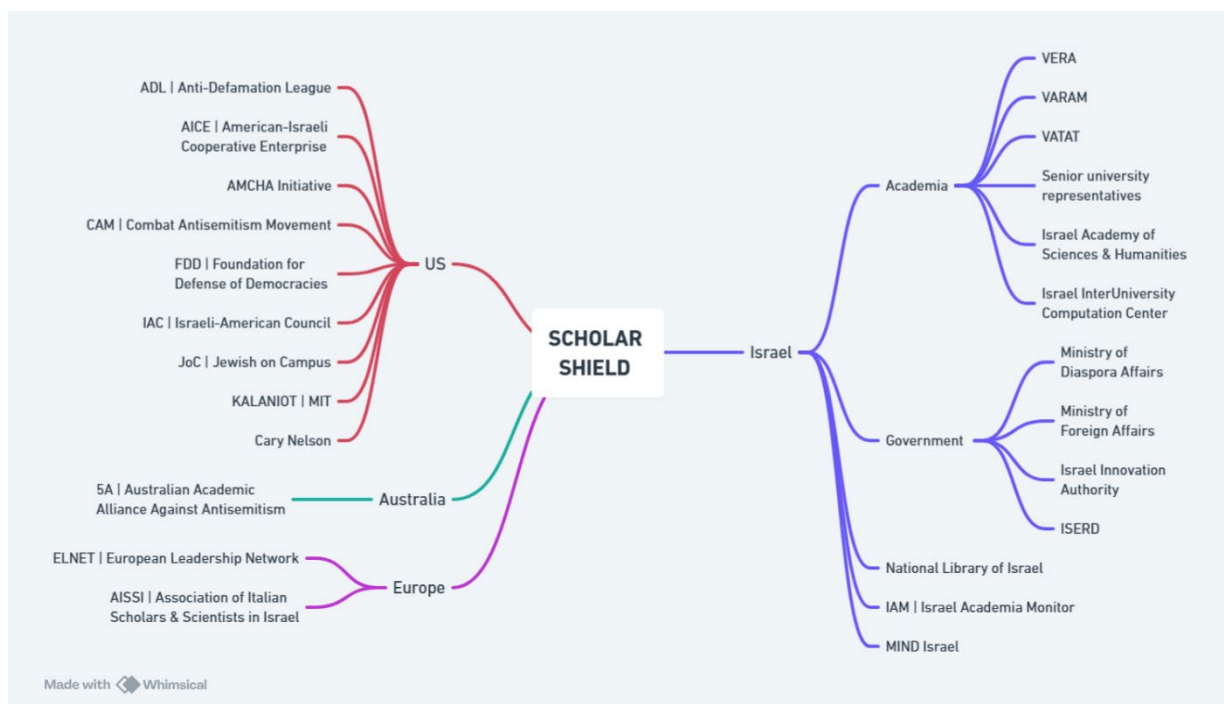
## Collaborating with Similarly Concerned Organizations and Drawing Data from them

The process of mapping and collaborating with organizations that address the academic BDS issue was a central axis in the research methodology. The research team has developed an investigation strategy to identify bodies with direct and indirect interest in the issue, focusing on those with in-depth knowledge, accessibility to unique information, and willingness to collaborate. The identification process included combing through databases, analyzing professional publications, and consulting with experts in the field, to create a list of relevant organizations that reflect a variety of viewpoints and layers of the issue.

Once the organizations were identified, an engagement strategy was established to optimally utilize existing organizational knowledge. The team developed a collaboration proposal that emphasizes the value of collaborative research, while ensuring complete transparency and protection for the interests of all involved parties. Personal inquiries were sent to officials in the relevant organizations, presenting the research goals and the potential for mutual benefit by promoting them.

The talks that were conducted with the organization representatives who responded were instrumental in deepening our research understanding. Out of all inquiries, 16 organizations expressed their willingness to collaborate. The list of organizations is available in the following figure (Figure 11). Talks concentrated on exposing unique insight, statistical data, and unique case studies. Representatives of these organizations shared information about BDS impacts, coping strategies, and legal and social aspects they have established in their work on the issue. Each interview was recorded and transcribed, with the interviewees' consent and in keeping with the rules of research ethics. Applied tools introduced during the talks and select data collected in the organization mapping process were published on the Scholar Shield webpage on the Samuel Neaman Institute website<sup>104</sup>.

Figure 11: Organizations with which research interviews were held



<sup>104</sup> Scholar Shield | Samuel Neaman Institute website ([link](#))

### 3.3 Research Methods

#### **Descriptive Statistics**

The data collected using the form for reporting academic BDS incidents is kept in a secure database and presented in a designated dashboard on the Samuel Neaman Institute website. The dashboard is available on the project webpage:

<https://www.neaman.org.il/project/scholar-shield/>

The characteristics of reporters, academic BDS incidents, and their impact, were described using descriptive statistics as presented in Article 4 below.



## 4.Findings

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### 4.1 Findings from Interviews with International Affairs and Research VPs in Universities

#### Findings from Interviews with International Affairs VPs

##### » International Collaboration Agreements

Some VPs reported the suspension or cancellation of collaboration agreements. For instance:

- Ghent University (Belgium) suspended collaborative programs with a faculty of law in one Israeli university
- Antwerp University (Belgium) cancelled Erasmus agreements in legal departments and in other disciplines
- Oslo Metropolitan University and Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Norway) suspended student exchange programs
- Autònoma University in Barcelona (Spain) cancelled its participation in two Horizon programs
- Concordia University (Canada) reduced collaborations due to student pressure

Simultaneously, there was an opposite trend of efforts to conserve and expand collaborations. These included:

- Institutions in Germany and the US (including universities like MIT and Cincinnati) contacted Israeli institutions to renew relations
- One university reported official visits by delegations from elite universities (such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton), which led to new collaborations

The VPs also reported knowledge of certain personal and implicit boycotts, which include expulsion of Israeli researchers from research groups or professional associations, foreign researchers pulling out of research groups that include Israeli researchers, and even foreign colleagues not answering inquiries.

##### » International Students and Exchange Programs

Most universities reported a decrease in participation by international students:

- In one university's Study Abroad program, the number of students decreased from 300-400 on a regular year to only 10 in the 2024-2025 academic year.

- In another university, about 80% of international students switched to hybrid learning after October 7 2023.
- In yet another university's student exchange program, enrollment decreased to only 15 in the 2024-2025 academic year.

This decrease was much less dramatic in students from countries such as India and China, or from African countries:

- One university reported that about 2/3 of its international students stayed despite the situation, particularly students from India, China, and Africa.
- In another university, 90% of postdoctoral students from India left in the beginning of the war but have since returned.

Some VPs reported that the institutions are trying to adapt to limitations by offering online learning for international students.

#### » **Concerns about International Travel**

- The universities reported a certain decrease in demand for conference participation due to concerns about anti-Israeli and antisemitic incidents. However, VPs of international affairs did not report specific incidents, save for one researcher who participated in a conference in Madrid, met with violent protest, and had to leave accompanied by security.
- Institutions offer workshops for faculty members in preparation of travel, as well as documents with guidelines for coping with incidents abroad.

#### » **Visiting Researchers and Doctoral Students**

- Universities reported a certain downward trend in the number of visiting researchers. In one university, the number of postdoctoral students decreased from 380 to 350 in the 2023-2024 academic year, and a 30% decrease was recorded in enrollment for advanced degrees and postdoctoral studies for the 2024-2025 academic year. Another university reported a decrease of 20%-30% among international doctoral students and faculty.
- University VPs expressed concern that the decrease in the number of doctoral and postdoctoral students will have a long-term impact on research activity.
- Some universities are acting to establish designated summer programs for hosting foreign researchers.

## » Strategies for Addressing Academic BDS

- **Legal action:** most universities had contacted the institutions that have suspended agreements, in an effort to renew collaboration. For example, at Antwerp University talks were held with a new rector who led a change in the university's attitude.
- **New programs:** universities are trying to address the decrease in student and faculty mobility by offering new programs. For example:
  - "First Year in English" – a program intended to draw foreign students (particularly Jewish students) and incorporate Hebrew learning in the following years.
  - Initiatives for sending faculty members on sabbaticals abroad as part of their assimilation grants.
- **Emphasis on national collaboration and branding:** initiatives like the creation of a national forum are meant to improve the international branding of Israeli academia.

One university stated that there is no need for a comprehensive strategy for addressing BDS incidents, but only for incident-specific, localized responses.

- Issues Common to all Universities
  1. Significant decrease in student exchange and study abroad programs
  2. Growing concern about foreign travel among faculty
  3. Institutional support for conserving international collaborations, despite difficulties
  4. Legal actions to reinstate collaborations and to prevent expulsion of Israeli researchers from research groups
  5. Efforts to collect data and gain strategic understanding of overall impact

## Findings from Interviews with Research VPs

### » Research Collaborations

- Most institutions did not yet identify downward trends in the rates of research grants secured or international award nominations.
- Foundations such as the ERC have remained stable in their rates of accepting research proposals (aggregately for all universities).
- The termination of international collaborations in research (e.g., with Ghent University in Belgium) had only a minor financial impact on Israeli academia as a whole. In some cases, the universities managed to rebuff BDS attempts.
- The universities reported a decrease in projects related to international consortia (through Horizon, COST, and Erasmus). One example was a consortium on capacity building that was

dismantled due to objections by foreign institutions to include Israeli partners. The decrease has an immediate impact mainly on universities like the Open University, whose main purview is teaching.

#### » Foreign Fellows and Visiting Faculty

- Some institutions recorded a decrease in the number of fellows and visiting professors, mainly due to security concerns and not necessarily due to pressure by the BDS movement. For instance:
  - The Technion reported 30 trips as part of its collaboration with the EuroTech University Alliance, but the frequency of arrivals by foreign partners to Israel remained low.
  - The Open University reported that research labs in the UK and the Netherlands have reduced collaborations. These universities sense hesitations about continuing collaboration due to concerns about the security situation and international image.

#### » Responses to and Strategies for Addressing Academic BDS

- Efforts are made to conserve collaborations using academic diplomacy and legal frameworks.

## 4.2 Snapshot based on academic BDS reports

The academic BDS snapshot presented in this chapter is based on reports about academic BDS by faculty members and students (for details about data collection, see [chapter 3.2](#)). Data analysis is presented in an interactive [dashboard](#) on the Neaman Institute website. The dashboard is divided into several subjects:

- **Incident arena:** including data of distribution by arena type, research type, extent of impact, boycott type, and whether there was a leading figure behind the incident
- **Arena and category:** distribution of arenas by category
- **Report characteristics:** field of boycotted reporter; is the report related to research/teaching/student activity; research type (basic, applied, clinical)
- **Geographic characteristics:** continent, country, distribution of continents by arena
- **Reporter characteristics:** affiliation, field, rank

As on May 2025, the database included 352 reports of BDS. The following articles present main findings stemming from data analysis.

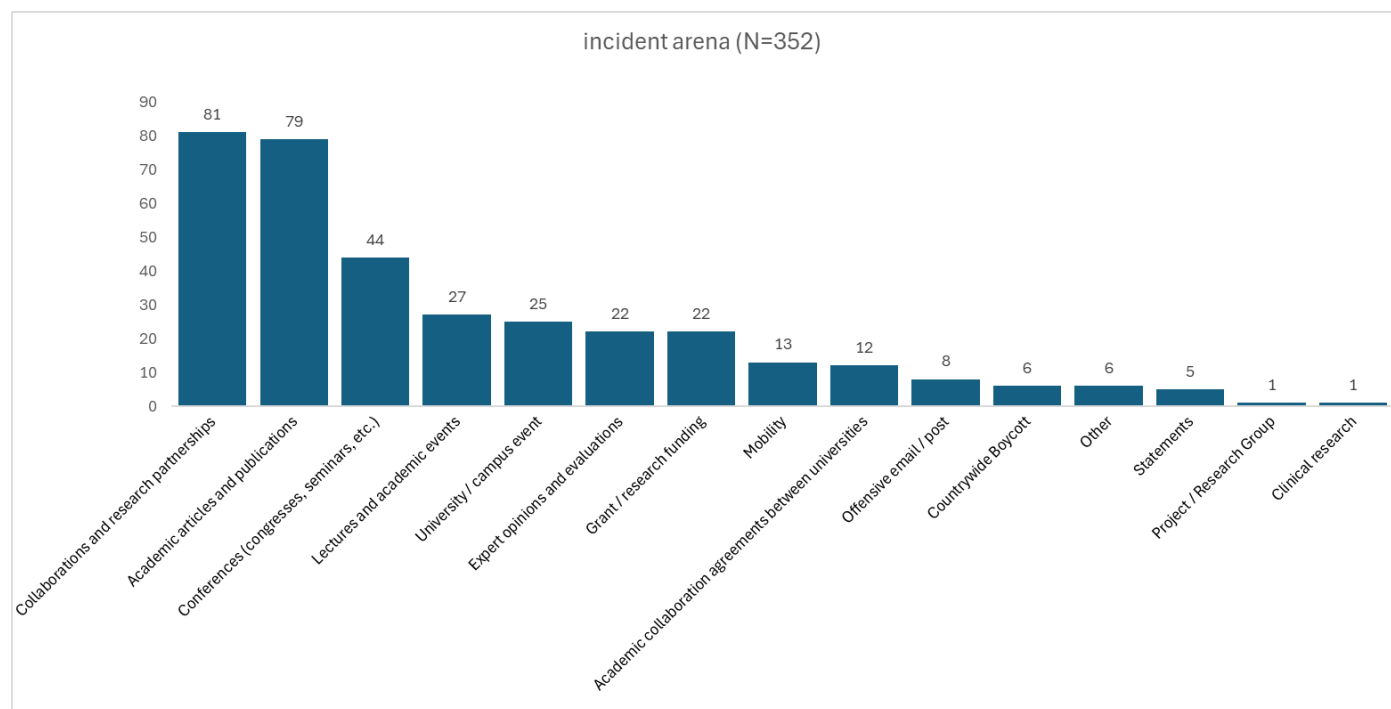
Clarification: the survey results presented in this report do not necessarily reflect the complete reality, as they only reflect the data reported. Please note that the survey is based

on the Neaman Institute’s reporting form, but also on data collected by the universities themselves. That is, multiple surveys disseminated in different means, creating a difference between institutions and fields in the extent of exposure, awareness, and responsiveness. It is possible that some institutions provided more encouragement to report or had greater awareness, while others underreported due to lack of encouragement or other limitations. Therefore, the survey results should not be interpreted as providing the complete picture or as necessarily representative of the phenomenon’s accurate extent. The findings should be reviewed carefully, with awareness of the limitations of the methodologies used.

## » Arena and Category

Approx. 60% of reports about BDS incidents occurred in three main arenas (Figure 13)<sup>105</sup>: research relationships and collaborations (23% of reports), academic publications and articles (23% of reports), and conferences (conventions, symposiums, seminars, etc.; 13% of reports).

Figure 12: Distribution of reports by incident arena



<sup>105</sup> List of arenas: research relationships and collaborations; academic publications and articles; conferences (conventions, symposiums, seminars, etc.); lectures and academic events; university/campus event; grant/research fund; opinions and evaluations; mobility; academic collaboration agreements between universities; offensive email/post; comprehensive national boycott; declarations; clinical trial; project/research group; other

Within the arena of **research relationships and collaborations**, three main categories were reported: suspension or delay of academic collaboration agreements between universities (33%), cutting research ties (31%), and refusal of collaborative research proposals (15%) (number of reports: 80).

Within the arena of **academic publications and articles**, 72% of reports fell under the category of not accepting/rejecting publications. 9% are reports of failure to provide feedback on articles, and 5% are of ceasing communications about articles (number of reports: 79).

64% of reports within the **conferences** arena are incidents of cancellation/prevention of participation, 9% are incidents of not accepting proposals for conferences, 7% are reports of refusal to visit Israel, and 7% are reports about failure to give credit (number of reports: 44).

The following figures present the distribution of main categories within the three main arenas reported.

Figure 13: BDS incident reports in the arena of **research relationships and collaborations** by main categories

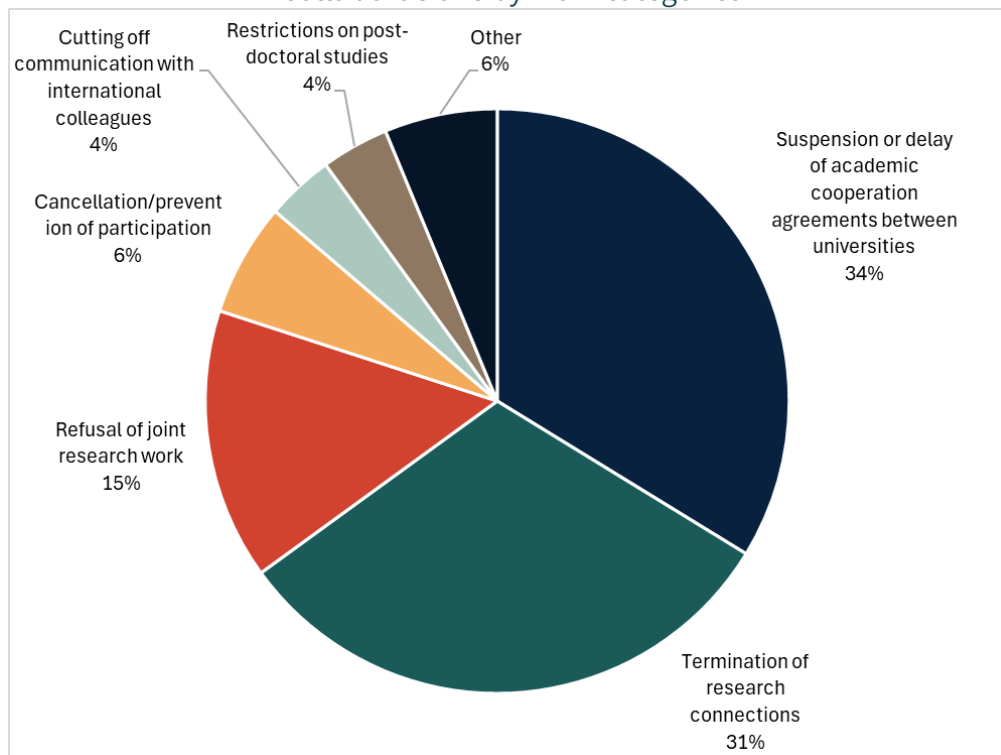


Figure 14: BDS incident reports in the arena of **academic publications and articles** by main categories

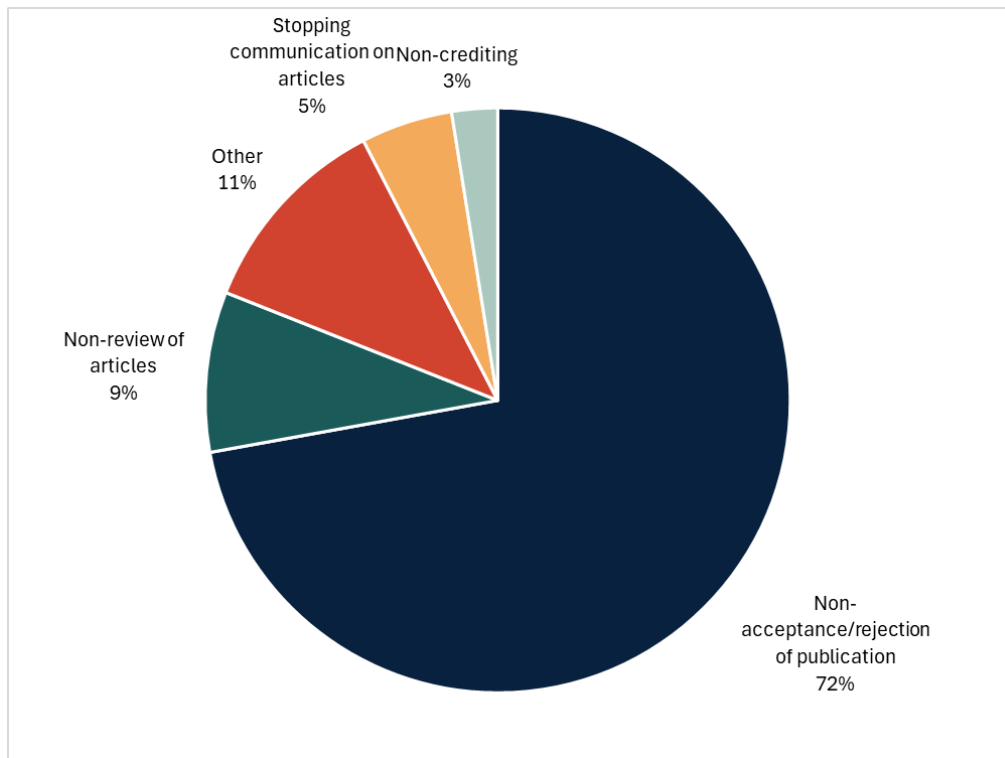
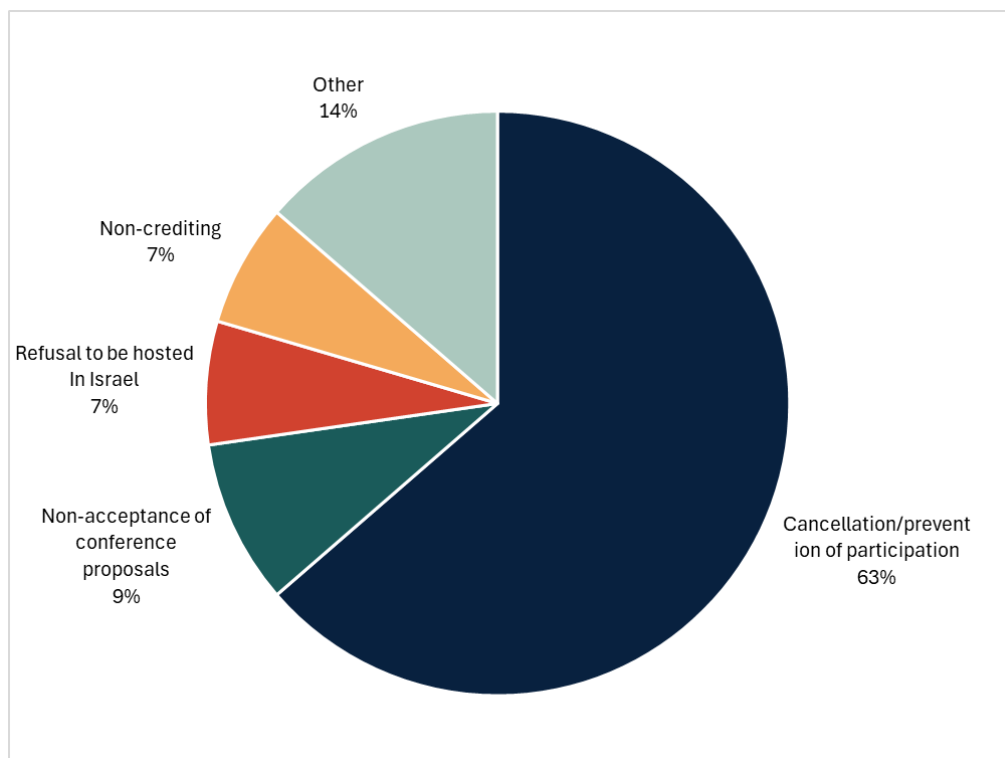
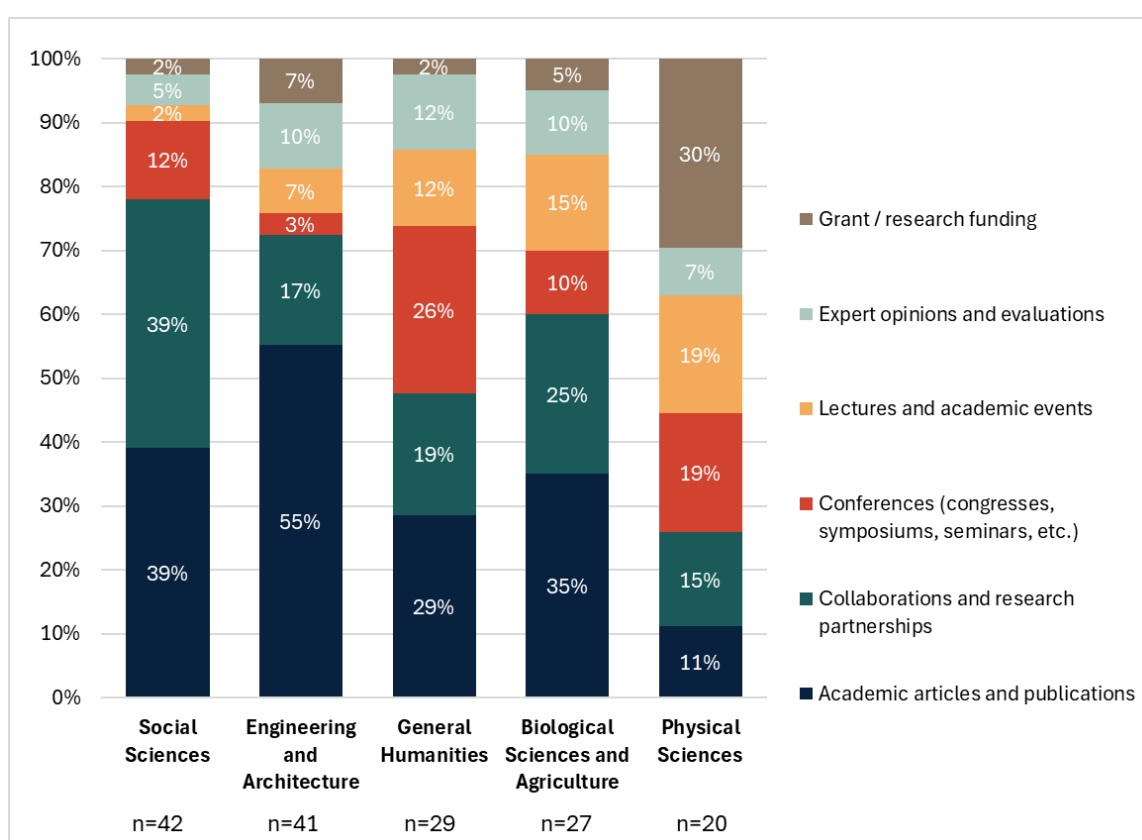


Figure 15: BDS incident reports in the arena of **conferences** by main categories



There are differences in incident arenas between reporters from different scientific disciplines. The following figure illustrates, for example, that social sciences have the highest rate of reports on BDS incidents related to research relationships and collaborations, while engineering and architecture have the highest rate of reports on incidents related to academic publications and articles. Physical sciences have the highest rate of reports related to grants and research funds. Note that the absolute number of reports is small, and therefore this stage only includes a description of the data and not statistical conclusions.

Figure 16: Academic BDS incident reports by disciplines and arenas in percentages out of all reporters



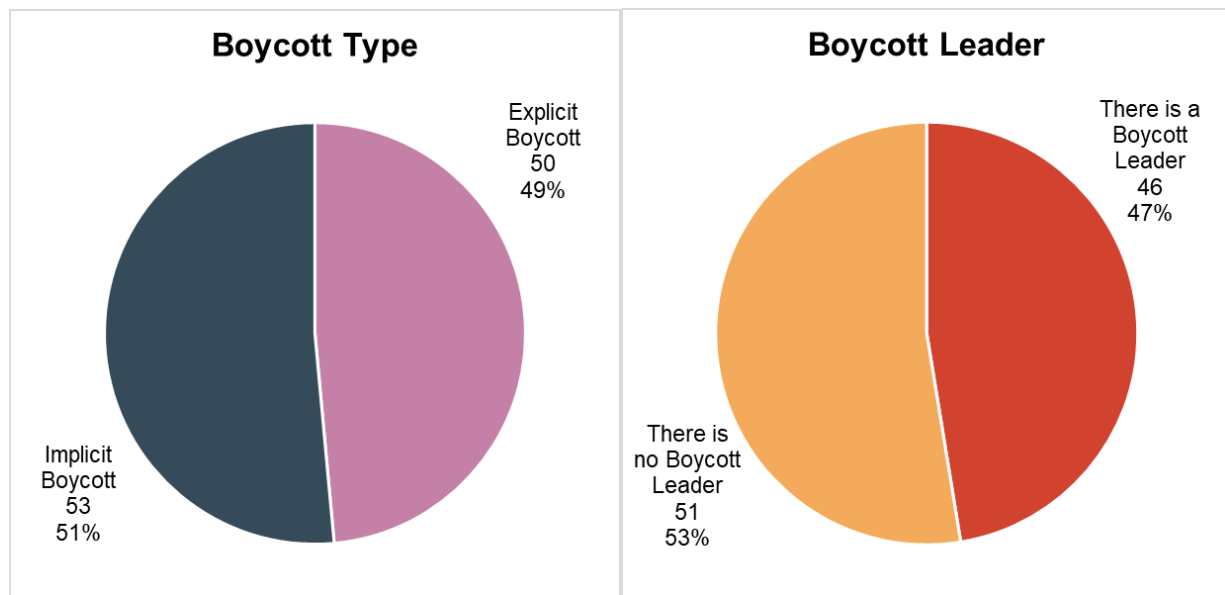
## » Type of boycott and leading figure

103 of the reporters indicated whether the incident constitutes implicit BDS (not explicitly said or written that the reported incident was due to the researcher being affiliated with Israel) or explicit BDS (explicitly said or written that the reported incident was due to the researcher being affiliated with Israel). Out of these, about 51% (53 incidents) were implicit, and 49% (50 incidents) were explicit.



97 individuals reported whether the BDS incident they encountered was organized by a specific person or not. 47% of respondents replied that the BDS incident had a specific organizer, such as an editor, researcher, organization member, or official. This information may be significant for choosing a coping strategy with the BDS incident.

Figure 17: Type of boycott and existence of leading figure



Most cases of implicit BDS pertained to academic publications and articles. Instances of explicit BDS were distributed among more diverse arenas, such as: research relationships and collaborations, conferences, or lectures and events, as shown in the following figure:

Figure 18: Academic BDS incident reports by implicit and explicit BDS and main arenas  
(N=86)

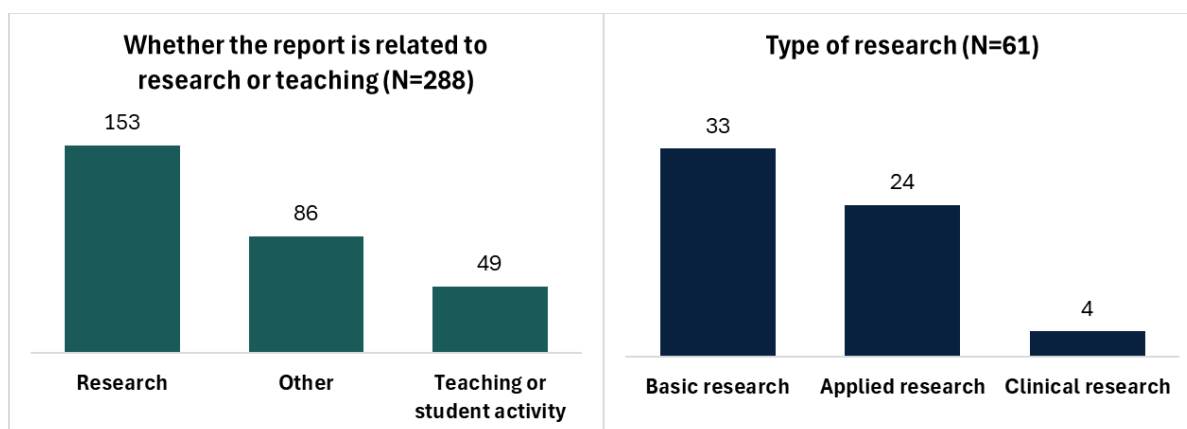


#### » Was the incident related to research or teaching?

Out of 288 reports, 153 (53%) reported that the BDS incident is related to research, and 49 (17%) reported that the incident is related to teaching or student activity.

61 individuals reported the type of research: 33 (54%) reported that the BDS incident was related to basic research, 24 (39%) reported that it related to applied research, and 4 (7%) reported that it related to clinical research.

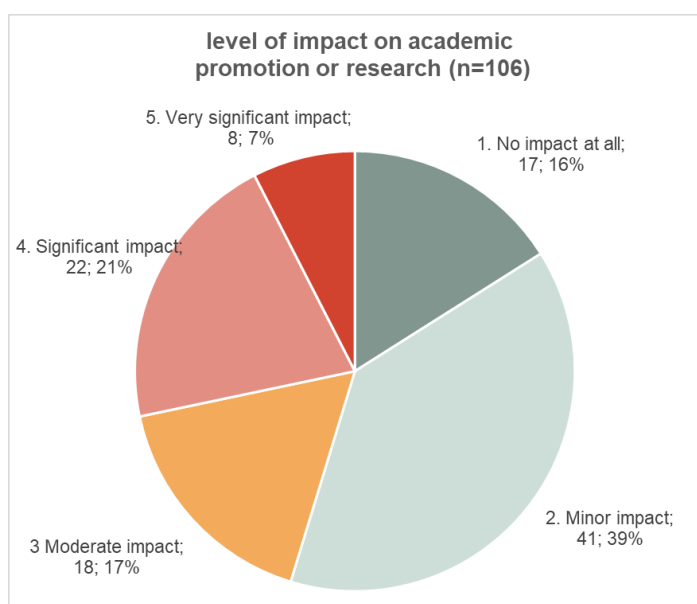
Figure 19: Type of research impacted by BDS



### » Level of impact on promotion or research

Out of 106 reporters who indicated the level of impact on promotion or research, 55% reported no impact or only a minor impact. The rest reported moderate impact (17%), significant impact (21%), and even highly significant impact (8%). The following figure presents the reports by impact level:

Figure 20: BDS incident reports by level of impact on academic promotion or research, in absolute values and percentages

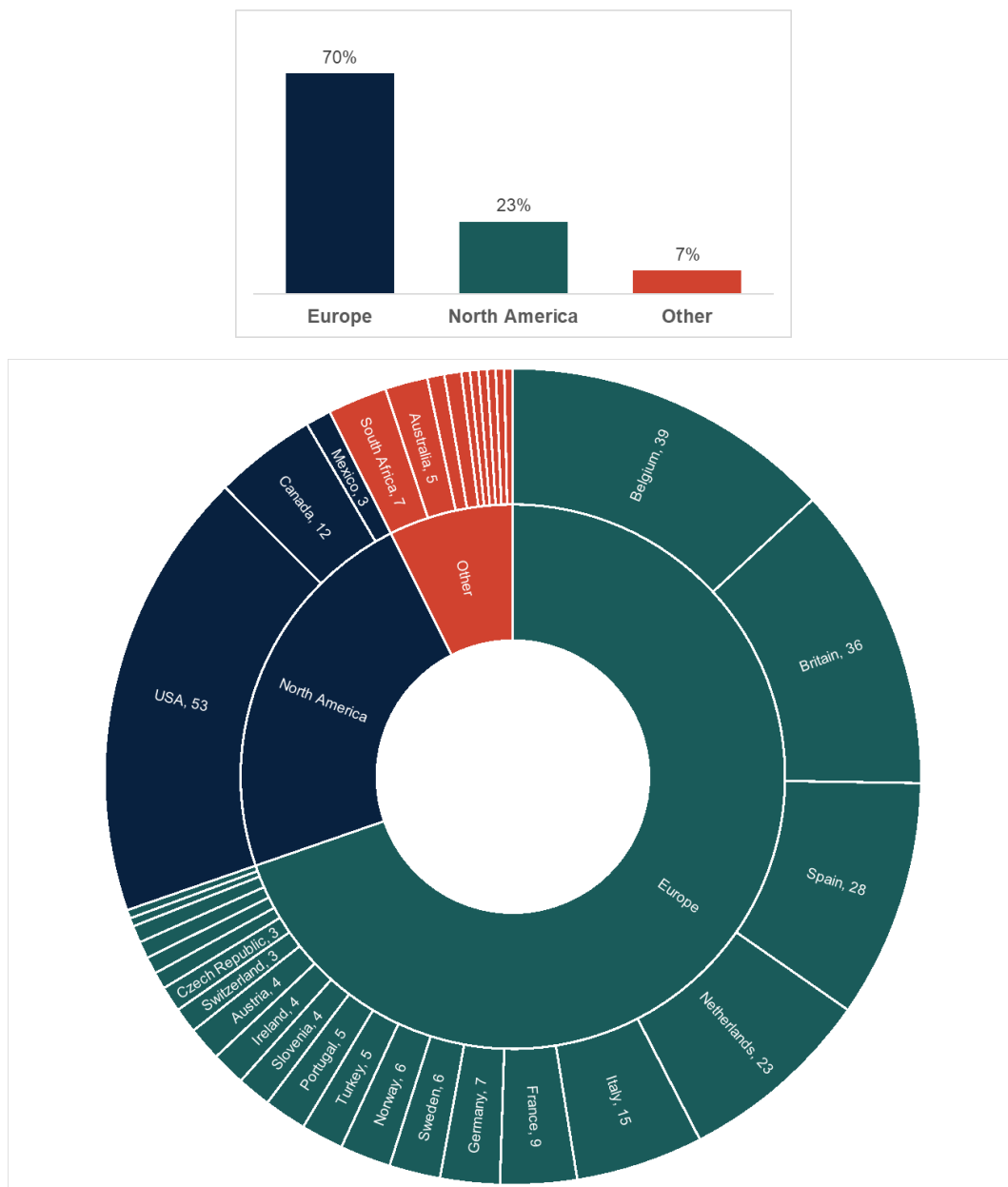


## Incident Continent and Country

### » Incidents by Continents

Most reports about BDS incidents took place in Europe (70% of reports) and North America (23% of reports). 7% of reports occurred in other continents<sup>106</sup>.

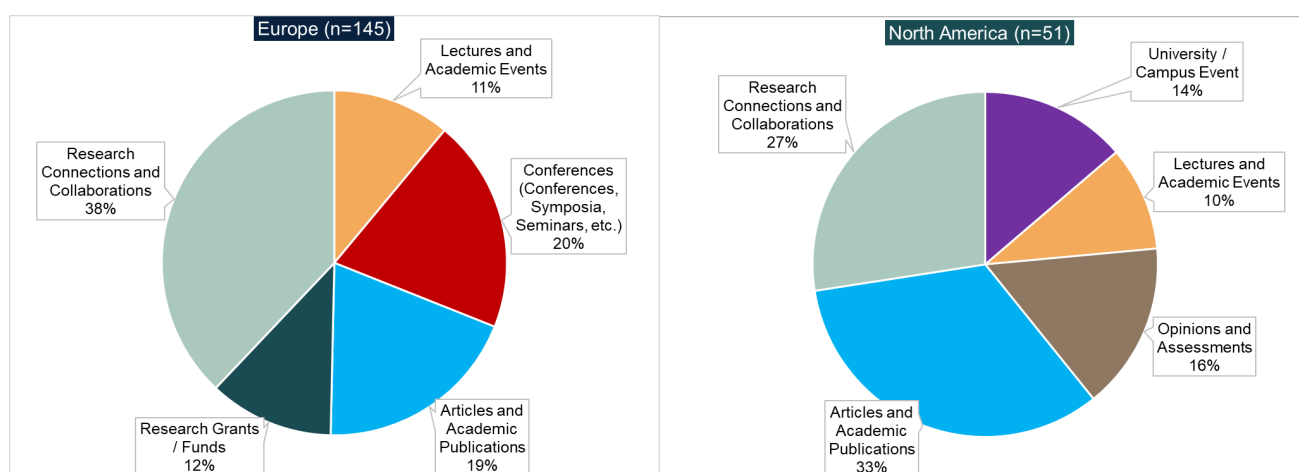
Figure 21: Academic BDS incident reports by continents and main countries (N=297)



<sup>106</sup> Europe other: Ireland (4), Slovenia (4), Czech Republic (3), Switzerland (3), Denmark (2), Europe (2), Finland (2), Scotland (2), Greece (1), Poland (1); North America: Mexico (3); Other continents other: South Africa (7), Australia (5), Chile (2), Hong Kong (2), China (1), India (1), Japan (1), Morocco (1), Saudi Arabia (1), Singapore (1).

There are differences between BDS incident arenas reported in North America and those reported in Europe. Academic BDS incidents in Europe were mostly in the arenas of research relationships and collaborations (38%) and conferences (20%). Academic BDS incidents in North America were mainly in the arenas of academic publications and articles (34%) and research collaborations (27%). Incidents on campus (such as protests or violence) were only reported in North America, while incidents related to conferences of all types were reported only in Europe. The following figures show the five main arenas indicated in most academic BDS reports, by continent:

Figure 22: Five arenas with most reports of academic BDS by continent, in percentages, out of all reporters about BDS incident in the continent



## Suggestions for Addressing BDS Incidents

### » Independent response

An analysis of ways in which the reporters tried to address the academic BDS incident themselves reveals a complex situation. The analysis was conducted by academic BDS type in the main arenas in which each respondent tried to act – e.g., in academic publications, conferences and congresses, collaborative work with colleagues, offensive emails, proposals for grants, on campus events. In each arena, different means of action were described, from formal letters to personal responses or avoidance. However, some themes stand out across the board: many have expressed frustration and disquiet pertaining to the unsatisfactory responses they received or the almost complete lack of institutional response. In contrast, there were also descriptions of local successes and examples of support. The following is an analysis by main arenas:

- **Academic publications and articles:** in this arena, respondents described instances of rejected articles, their name being removed as authors, or discriminatory conduct by editors. Actions taken included contacting the editors, personal correspondence, appeals, or contacting institutional entities. The sense of efficacy was mostly low. Most respondents stated that their response was rejected or ignored.
  - “I sent a letter to the journal editor describing the problem, but received a generic answer – nothing happened afterwards.”
  - “Eventually they issued an amendment to the published article – but only after I contacted an assistant editor with a detailed explanation.”
- **Academic conferences and congresses:** respondents reported participation cancellation, reduction of roles, or objection to their presence in conferences. Many contacted the organizers or institution presidents, tried to initiate alternatives, or chose to refrain from participating. The efficacy was mostly low. Participants felt that conference organizers avoided addressing the issue directly.
  - “I received a formal answer that the conference was taking place ‘as planned’, but in effect my name and position have been removed from the agenda.”
- **Research collaborations:** suspended collaborations, refusal to collaborate, or cancelled participation. The attempts reported were to individually contact researchers or research partners to change their minds. Protesting via direct correspondence or letters. Ceasing collaboration with entities that required discriminating terms. Some respondents managed to generate new collaborations, but others were met with apathy or a dismissive response.
  - “I spoke to the researcher and asked her not to put my name on the article if she is not interested in collaboration – I felt that it wasn’t respectable.”
- **Offensive emails:** response to offensive emails included blocking, polite responses, contacting internal authorities or consulting with colleagues. Attempts were made to respond politely and respectfully to the offenders, writing replies intended to explain the situation and reduce hostility. Limited efficacy was reported.
  - “I wrote a polite response and expressed my disappointment over the level of discourse. It didn’t change his mind, but I felt that I stood my ground.”
- **Grants and funding sources:** respondents reported mystifying rejections of grants or suspensions of proposals. Some appealed, while others looked for alternative funding. Some of those who appealed managed to get a response, but in most cases the decision was not changed.

- “I appealed, I received a generic explanation. I realized that they have no real intention of reexamining their position.”
- **Campus events and activities:** respondents reported varying responses by management – from passive support, through offers of emotional help, to refraining from actual involvement. Sometimes personal support was given, but no consistent systematic response.
  - “The head of the department listened and admitted that the situation is problematic, but in actuality he did nothing.”
- **National-level Comprehensive BDS:** in such cases of BDS, the most prominent action was official letters written by academic administrations to express their protest and/or emphasize the violation of academic freedom.

#### Main Trends in Independent Actions

- **Direct protest:** most reporting researchers attempted to contact the entities involved directly – journal editors, conference organizers, or colleagues – in an attempt to change the decision or receive clarifications.
- **Institutional involvement:** in many cases, the respondents attempted to get institutional entities involved, such as rectors, deans, or other officials, particularly when the impact was severe or systematic. They sometimes received partial support, but other times only got laconic responses or no response at all.
- **Using alternative channels:** researchers contacted other journals, participated in alternative conferences, looked for grants from international entities, and sometimes even opened independent channels of action out of desperation or as a countermeasure.
- **Private and public action:** some respondents chose to act discreetly – e.g., using personal correspondence, communicating directly with a colleague – while others took public action such as widely distributed letters, public posts, or contacting the media. The choice of strategy was often influenced by their evaluation of the chance to succeed, and sometimes by personal or professional safety considerations.

In summary, respondents acted in various ways to address instances of academic BDS, but it is apparent that most ways were perceived as ineffective. Institutional support was mostly limited, with responses ranging between silence, avoidance, or technical responses, to anecdotal support or personal responses.

## Suggestions for Addressing Academic BDS Incidents

Among the respondents who provided a response to this open question, several means of action and proposals for addressing academic BDS were identified. Suggestions were classified into five main categories: strengthening ties, public advocacy, action against boycotters, intra-academic support, and preparation for visits.

Table 8: Summary of suggestions for addressing BDS from BDS incident report form (N=32)

Category	Suggestions
<b>Strengthening collaborations and relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continuing to strengthen existing ties and insisting on renewing suspended ties</li> <li>▪ Adopting global models of inter-institutional collaboration (such as CERN)</li> <li>▪ Participating in conferences despite BDS, to empower supporters</li> <li>▪ Investing in those who support Israel, and arranging their visits in Israel</li> </ul>
<b>Public advocacy and message dissemination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Educating for complex thinking and for differentiation between academia and government</li> <li>▪ Educating about lessons of the holocaust from an early age</li> <li>▪ Contacting key individuals in universities, to explain the Israeli point of view</li> <li>▪ Encouraging personal and apolitical discourse with colleagues</li> <li>▪ Emphasizing the contribution of academia to criticism against the government</li> </ul>
<b>Action against boycotters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publishing lists of BDS supporters, and preventing them from reviewing research</li> <li>▪ Contacting funding organizations to apply pressure on BDS-supporting institutions</li> <li>▪ Shaming on every possible stage</li> <li>▪ Launching a website that specifies the names of boycotters</li> </ul>
<b>Intra-academic support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognizing how difficult it is to get published, and changing criteria for academic excellence</li> <li>▪ Clarifying that those who boycott Israeli institutions such as Ariel, may be impacted themselves</li> </ul>



Category	Suggestions
<b>Preparation for visits (Israelis/foreigners)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordinating in advance with hosting institutions, so that they put mechanisms in place to protect visiting Israelis (e.g., signing an advance obligation not to engage in disorderly conduct)</li> <li>▪ Communicating with foreign universities about their conduct when hosting Israelis</li> </ul>

### » Assistance from an academic institution or authority

Of the 94 individuals who replied to the question “would you expect assistance from your institution or any authority”, about 60% replied “yes” and 40% replied “no”.

Many of those who responded about expecting institutional assistance added comments explaining why assistance was or was not required, and what kind of support they would have expected to receive. Their comments give rise to senses of loneliness and uncertainty in the face of academic BDS manifestations, sometimes accompanied by a sense of helplessness due to the lack of a clear mechanism for addressing the issue. Some respondents expressed a lack of trust in the institution’s ability to act effectively, whether following a disappointing past experience or whether out of a belief that academic institutions are not equipped to handle political or international complexities. Others did not expect any assistance at all, assuming that this was a widespread problem that a single institution cannot solve.

Among those who expected assistance, suggestions focused mainly on two types of support: concrete assistance like help contacting the relevant entities, drafting official responses, or supporting and promoting structural changes pertaining to evaluation of academic excellence for promotion. However, alongside the demands for institutional responses, some respondents espouse a more careful approach, preferring to refrain from direct action so as not to make matters worse. Such an approach stems from a belief that a harsh or high-exposure reaction may exacerbate the sense of alienation towards Israeli researchers, and it is therefore vital to act moderately, strengthening existing ties and preserving collaborations.

### Conclusions from Reporters’ Comments about the Required Assistance from the Academic Institution or any Authority

Comments written by the researchers indicate that they expect academic institutions to provide direct and significant support in cases of BDS. Many of them emphasized the importance of formal institutional action, such as sending official letters to foreign institutions, contacting media or diplomatic entities, and sometimes even representing the researcher against the international entities in which the incident took place.

They also expected concrete assistance to ameliorate the professional impact that was caused – e.g., recognition of a rejected article for promotion purposes, help identifying alternative funding sources, reducing requirements for research reports in grants, or assistance locating alternative journals for publication.

Some of the respondents emphasized the need for regulatory and structural adaptations – like changing the criteria for academic promotion in cases where BDS impacts are evident – and even suggested establishing a designated institutional committee to consult and instruct. Others commented on the need for inter-institutional coordination and for leadership by the Council for Higher Education or Ministry of Science, to prevent a situation where institutions are acting solitarily and failing to suppress instances of exclusion.

Finally, they also indicated the importance of wider systematic support – whether by personal consultation, public solidarity, or increased advocacy within the institution – to give researchers the sense that they are supported and protected in times of external criticism.

## Respondent Characteristics

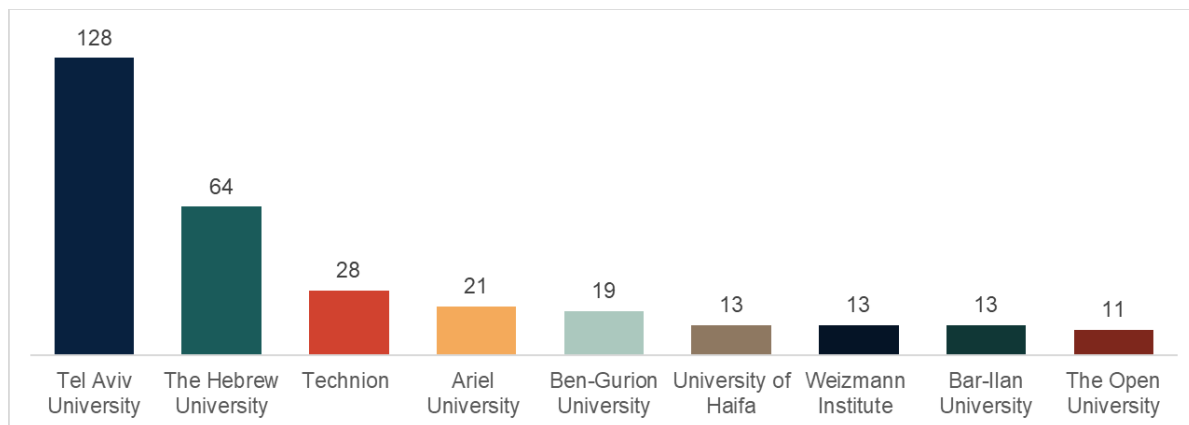
### » Academic Affiliation and Rank

Most reports (310, 89%) are by researchers from Israeli universities. There are 22 reports from Israeli colleges and 13 reports from Israeli researchers in foreign universities (doctoral or postdoctoral students). Five reports are from research institutes and hospitals.

Of the reports by researchers from universities, most reports originated from Tel Aviv University (127), followed by the Hebrew University (62). The other universities contributed 10 to 22 reports each.

The differences stem mostly from the willingness of faculty members in the various universities to report BDS incidents, and does not necessarily indicate that some universities experience significantly more BDS incidents than others.

Figure 23: Distribution of BDS incident reports by university (N=310)



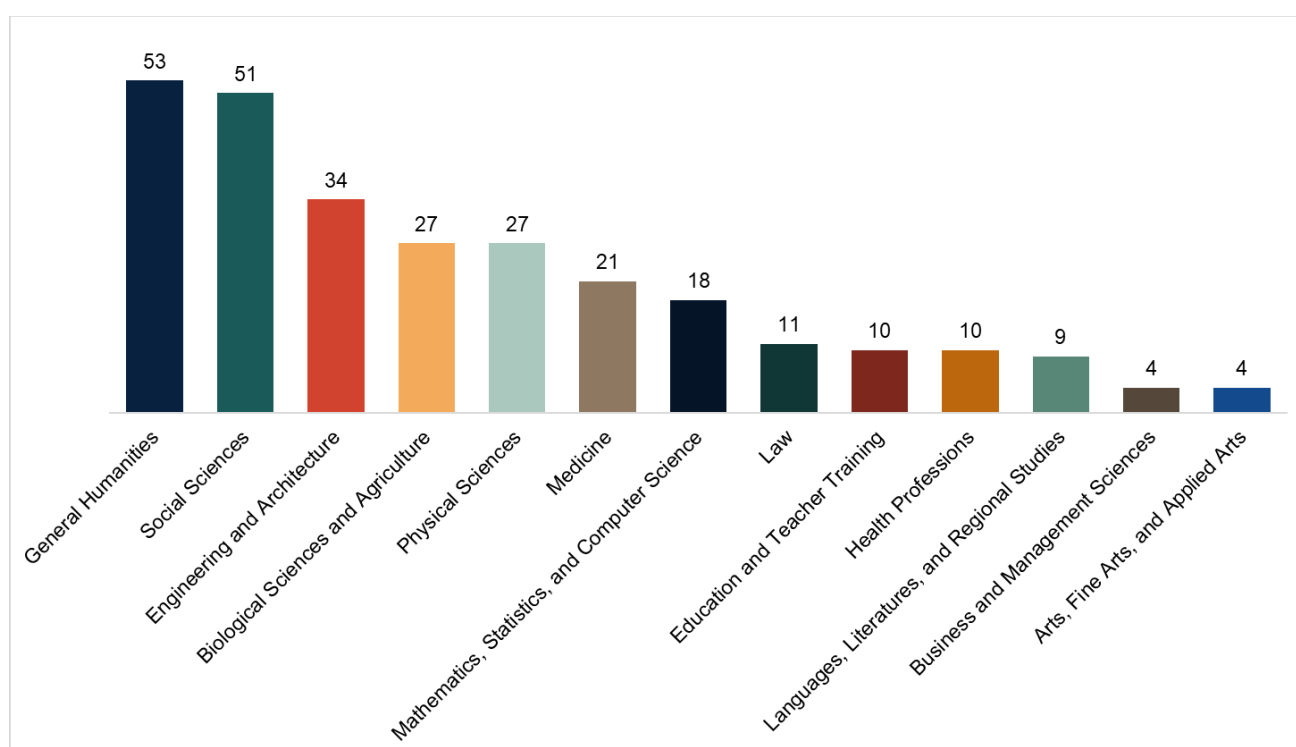
The 22 College reports came from the following institutions: Shenkar College of Engineering, Design and Art (3), Sapir Academic College (3), Kinneret College (2), College of Management Academic Studies (2), Tel Hai College (2), Yezreel Valley College (1), Kibbutzim College (1), Afeka College (1), Braude College of Engineering (1), Levinsky-Wingate Academic College (1), and Rupin Academic Center (1).

Of the 106 individuals who have indicated their academic rank in the reporting form, 79 were faculty members (75%). 11 of them (10%) are research students (doctoral and postdoctoral), and 4 (4%) are undergraduates. 11 additional reporters (10%) are of another academic rank, retired, or external lecturers.

## » Academic Discipline

The following figure depicts the distribution of BDS incident reports by the researchers' discipline. In 279 cases the researchers reported the academic discipline to which the BDS incident pertained. The data indicates that most reports come from the humanities (19%) and social sciences (18%), while in exact sciences like engineering, biological and physical sciences, medicine, and computer sciences, a lower level of reporting was recorded. Disciplines such as law, education, arts, and business management also report less. The variance may reflect differences in the level of encouragement to report BDS incidents, in the measure of exposure to BDS incidents in international academic arenas, or in the level of affinity to areas that are considered political.

Figure 24: Reports of BDS incidents by academic discipline (N=279)

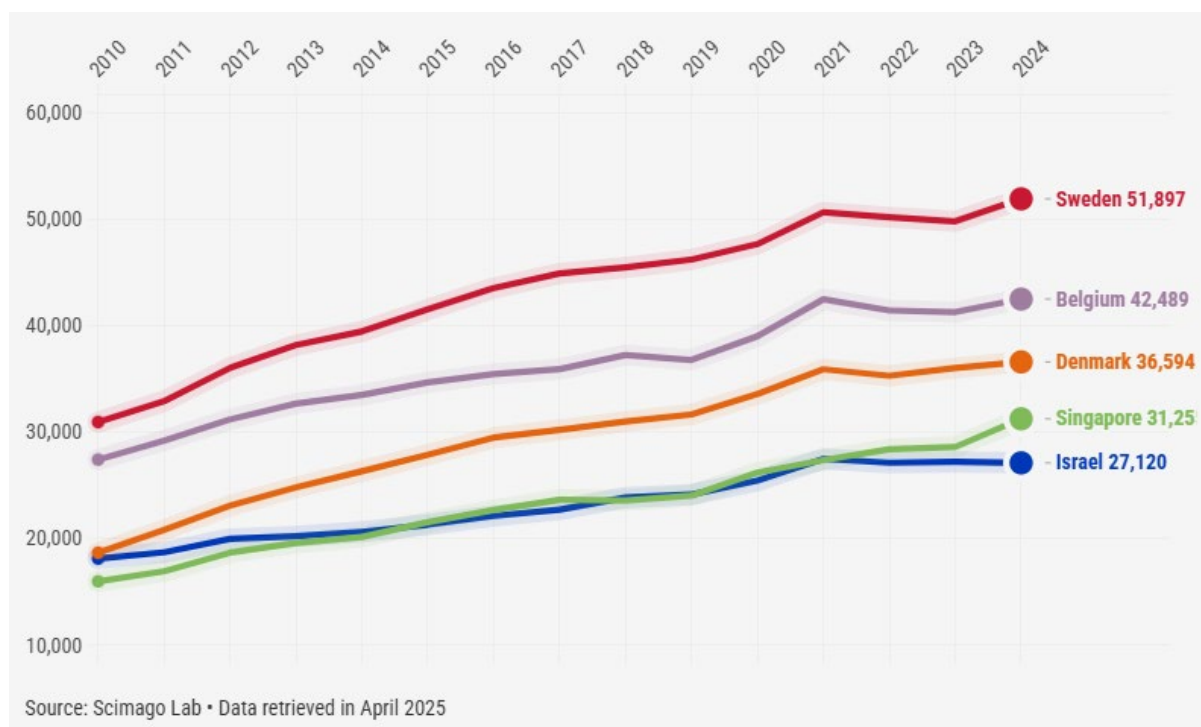


### 4.3 Scientific Publications

A macro analysis of scientific publications originating from Israel in the context of academic BDS provides an opportunity to examine whether changes are occurring in the extent of academic activity, in the composition of collaborations, and in the international visibility of researchers and institutions, focusing on indicators such as the volume of publications overtime and the rate of international collaboration. Using bibliometric tools, we can identify trends of academic isolation or exclusion, as well as adaptive strategies by institutions and researchers working under boycott conditions. This analysis provides insight about the manner in which BDS policy affects the research community's patterns of activity, and about the possibilities for preserving scientific continuity in changing conditions.

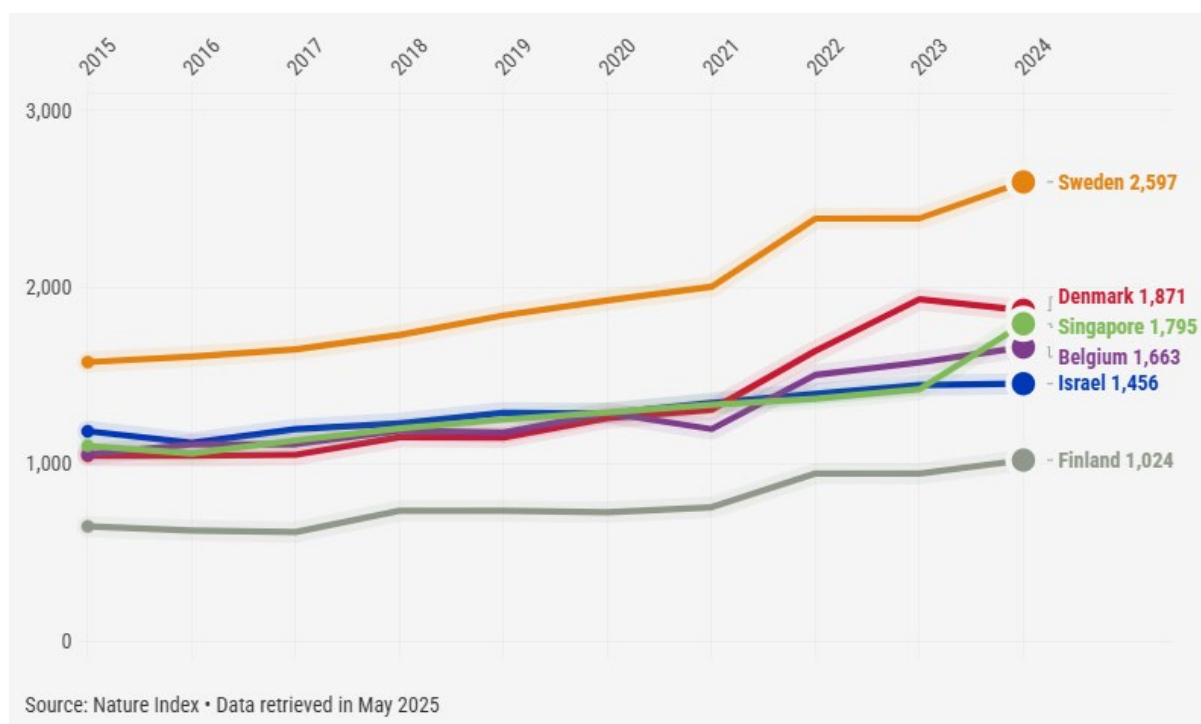
The data in the following figure indicates that in 2024, no significant decrease was observed in the number of scientific publications from Israel. Israel's number of publications remains relatively stable in comparison to previous years. However, it should be noted that the number of publications by other countries in the figure increased by an average of 4.7% between 2023 and 2024, while the number of Israeli publication decreased by 0.3%. This trend attests that at this point, the potential impacts of external factors have not yet significantly manifested themselves in the extent of Israeli scientific output.

Figure 25: Annual number of publications by Israel and comparable countries<sup>107</sup>, 2010-2024



The Nature Index ranking presents the number of scientific publications in select journals that are considered leading in quality in exact sciences, life sciences, chemistry, and physics. Data reflects the academic entities' level of involvement in groundbreaking research and their level of influence within the international research community. The results in the following figure indicate a consistent upwards trend in the number of Israeli scientific publications in the last decade. In this indicator as well, no decrease was observed in 2024. However, it is certainly possible that the impacts of academic BDS will become more evident from 2025 onwards.

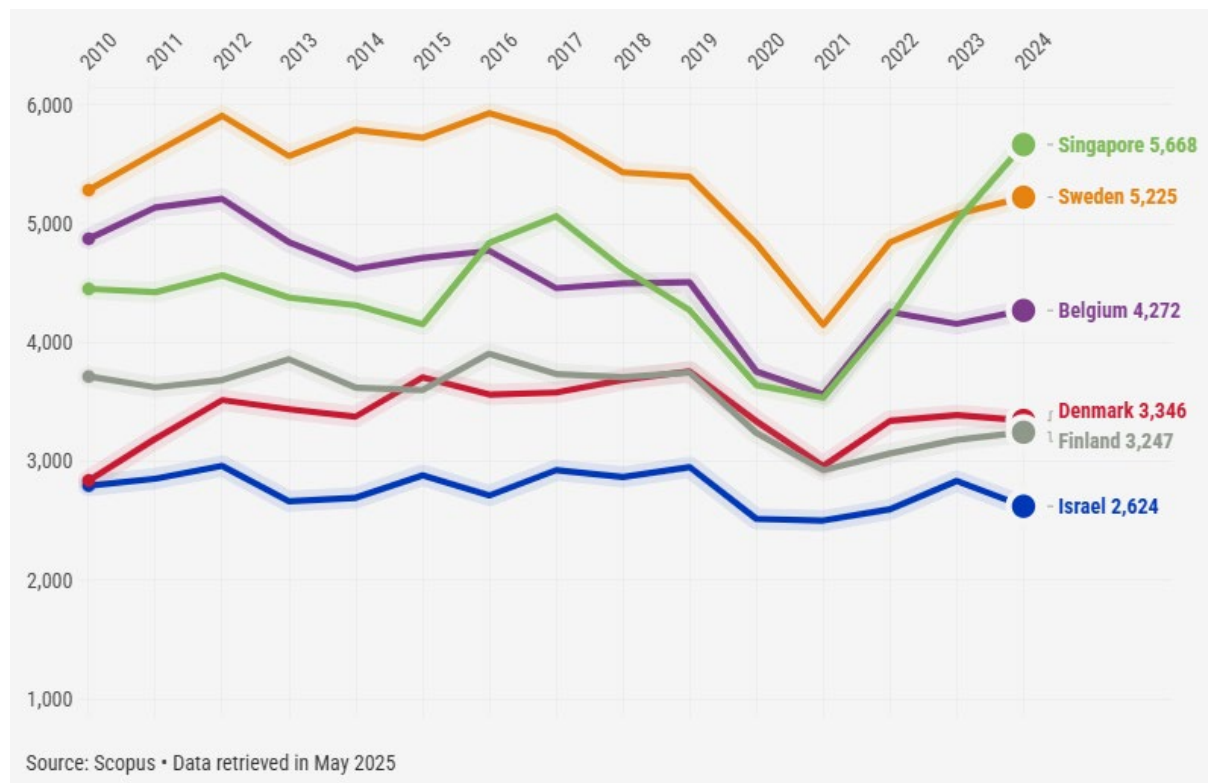
<sup>107</sup> Countries with similar characteristics to Israel in terms of population size and extent of annual publications.

Figure 26: Annual number of publications in Nature Index ranking<sup>108</sup>, 2010-2024

The number of articles accepted for presentation in international conferences may also be an early indicator of academic BDS impact, as proposals for conferences are accepted or denied in a relatively short time frame, unlike publications in scientific journals, which undergo a prolonged peer review process. The data in the following figure indicates that in 2024, there was a 7% decrease in this indicator compared to the previous year, while numbers for the comparable countries presented remained stable, and even increased. This may stem from the fact that many Israeli researchers refrained from going abroad due to reserve duty by researchers or their spouse, other difficulties caused by the war (like the drastic decline in the number of flights), etc. At the same time, this result may also be directly connected to BDS phenomena – researchers refraining from attending conferences due to fear of harassment by extremists or conference organizers adopting approaches of exclusion, political screening, or rejecting collaboration. To the extent that the second possible explanation holds true, this indicator provides some indication of the harmful impact of academic BDS.

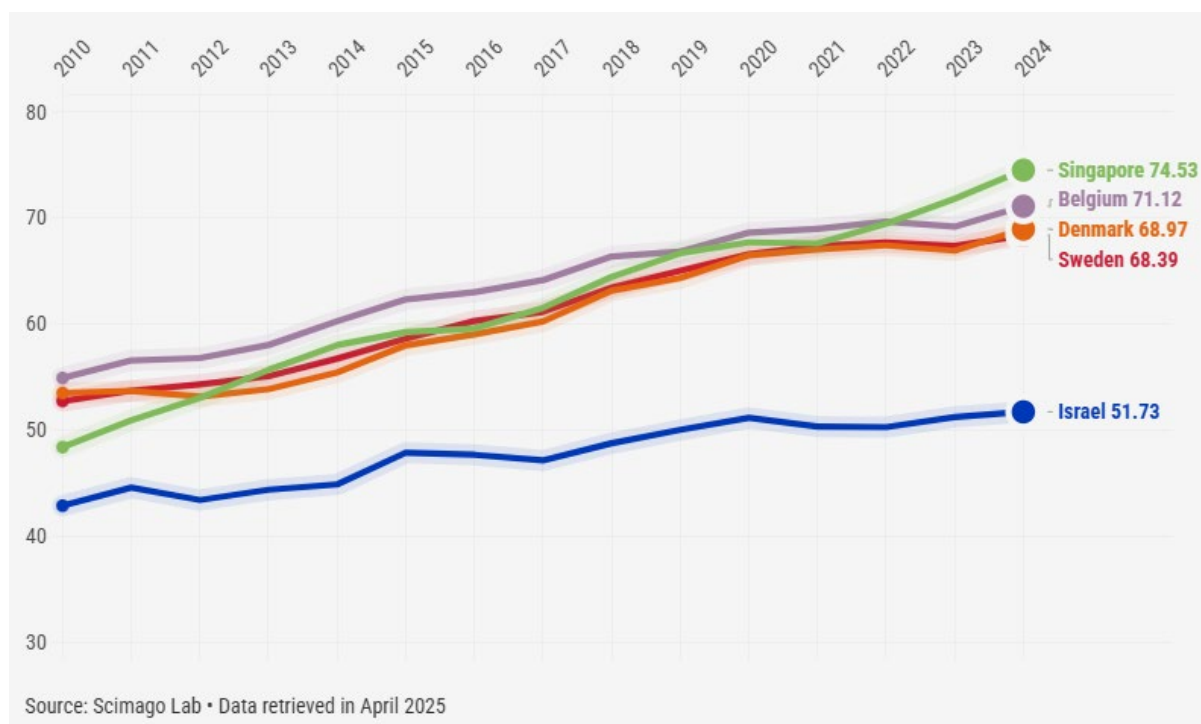
<sup>108</sup> Data source: [Nature Index](#)

Figure 27: Number of conference publications by Israel and comparable countries, 2010-2024



The rate of international collaborations in scientific publications constitutes a main indicator of the Israeli research system's level of connection to the global scientific community. This rate has consistently grown in the years 2010-2024, as illustrated in the following figure. This trend reflects persistent strengthening of Israel's international scientific ties, and may attest to the Israeli academic system's overall resilience and adaptability to changing global conditions. Nonetheless, despite this impressive increase, the differences between Israel and comparable countries point to the impact of systematic factors – e.g., accessibility to international funding sources, integration in existing research networks, and level of openness by higher education institutions to cross-border collaborations. In addition, the increasing threats of academic BDS in recent years may have contributed to inhibiting Israel's rate of integration in the global research system, even if their impact on quantitative data is not yet significant.

Figure 28: Rate of international collaboration in scientific publications – Israel and comparable countries<sup>107</sup>, 2010-2024



The connection between a country's number of scientific publications and the rate of its international collaborations is complicated, but there is often correlation between these two variables. It is important to note that international collaborations are not only the result of research policy, but also a mechanism by which the number of publications increases, as every scientific publication generated as part of an international collaboration is counted towards all participating countries. Therefore, countries involved in international projects usually enjoy the benefits of double counting, contributing to a significant increase in their overall number of publications. This reinforces the importance of conjointly analyzing both indicators – publication number and rate of collaborations – to understand the dynamics of international scientific activity.

The fact that Israel retains a relatively low rate of international collaborations, despite a consistent upwards trend, may explain some of the difference in publication number, as compared with the European countries that lead in this indicator. Leading countries systematically and comprehensively participate in collaborative research program, like Horizon Europe, awarding them not only access to funding and research infrastructure, but also greater exposure to international publication, which are then counted towards each of the participating countries – thus contributing to a considerable increase in their volume of scientific publications.



#### 4.4 Findings from Survey by the Israel Young Academy

A survey by the Israel Young Academy published in 2024<sup>109</sup> provides significant insight about the impacts of society, defense policy, and politics on the international status of Israeli academia. It should be noted that the dissemination of the survey among respondents was completed in August 2023, before the October 7 attack. The report findings indicate an increase in awareness and concern among young researchers, about growing exclusion on the part of the global academic community. This concern is only exacerbated by recent political and security events in Israel, particularly the October 7 2023 attack and the consequent Sword of Iron War. The report states that “these events give rise to grave concern that Israeli academia’s level of internationality will be impacted by Israel’s exclusion from the global academic community”, thus officially drawing a direct line between political-security considerations and a potential for academic impact.

This conclusion is also supported by an analysis of trends in the field: decrease in interdisciplinary collaborations, difficulty in recruiting research students from abroad, and decrease in funding intended for international students, all indicators attesting to a materializing challenge in academic international affairs. The average number of foreign post-doctoral students advised by respondents has decreased substantially, from 1.03 in 2019 to 0.63 in 2023. Researchers also report a decline in collaboration initiatives with foreign colleagues, alongside a decrease in satisfaction about institutional support for promoting such connections.

The report also presents designated recommendations for preventing the exclusion of Israel from the international academic community, including: allocating designated resources for hosting foreign researchers, exercising flexibility in sorting processes for international candidates, and supporting mechanisms for strengthening cross-border collaborations. The recommendations reflect an understanding that coping with potential academic BDS is not only a political or media issue, but also requires a proactive institutional policy and a willingness to incentivize international initiatives.

Indirectly, the report indicates that academic BDS is no longer perceived as a purely external threat, but is now seen as a phenomenon with functional and psychological impact on Israel’s internal academic sphere. The survey emphasizes the importance of international channels not only to promote research, but as an anchor of stability in the face of geopolitical fluctuations, providing an empirical infrastructure for discussing potential implications of academic BDS.

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<sup>109</sup> Israel Young Academy (2024). Survey of Early Career Scholars in Israel 2023. Jerusalem [\[source\]](#).

The report's conclusions reflect the manner in which local academic arenas are impacted by global processes, and particularly by the political discourse about Israel in higher education institutions around the world. The data implies that early-career researchers in Israel are no longer operating within an isolated academic sphere, but in an environment where collaboration with foreign colleagues is a critical condition for scientific progress. Under such conditions, academic BDS can significantly impact the ability of Israeli academics to grow, publish, and integrate in leading research communities, whether by formal disengagement or by unofficial evasion of collaborations. The findings even emphasize that the potential damage is not only institutional, but also personal, manifesting in a sense of professional isolation, barriers to student recruitment, and limitations on conference participation or grant reception.

The report therefore establishes the understanding that Israel's academic internationality is not a foregone conclusion, and that proactive action and long-term resources are required to preserve Israel's status in the international scientific community. It also encourages higher education institutions to establish an active policy against academic isolation, while strengthening existing ties, promoting academic diplomacy, and setting internationality as a strategic goal.

#### **4.5 Analysis of friendliness level of Israeli universities' websites and registration and admissions systems for international students – findings**

Recent years have seen a rise in attention to the academic BDS of Israel, whether by explicit calls to refrain from collaborations or whether by silent actions of minimizing connections and student exchanges with Israeli institutions. In this reality, Israel has a strategic and national interest to attract international students and scholars, recognizing the value of cultural diversity, of knowledge exchanges, and of enhancing Israel's scientific-technological global status.

Moreover, an increased presence of international students and researchers serves to counter BDS: it creates strong international networks, presents a free and multicultural academic reality, and allows alumni of Israeli institutions to disseminate knowledge and experiences about Israel upon return to their origin countries.

However, to encourage international students to choose Israeli universities, Israeli institutions must offer a high level of accessibility and a user-friendly website in English (and sometimes in additional languages). The manner in which an academic institution presents its curricula, bureaucratic procedures, and details of international aid, may prove pivotal to a possible candidate's decision to apply or give up in advance.

In examining Israeli academia's user-friendliness and accessibility to foreign students and scholars, we first identified the main parameters that are the most important to international candidates searching for a place of research or internship: accessibility to English information, specification of registration procedure, information about scholarships and housing, sustainability, FAQ, etc. We then thoroughly reviewed the website of Israeli universities, and examined to what extent they meet these parameters. The review revealed that the universities that offer all the necessary information on their website are also notable in the significant number of international students who attend them.

The following are parameters identified as important in university website aimed at international students:

1. **Accessibility** – a website with a complete and up-to-date English version, intended specifically for non-Hebrew speaking students. We recommend including pages of guidance and explanation in English, and perhaps adding other languages.
2. **Administrative support for international students** – introducing the international office that provides support and assistance in all bureaucratic matters, from obtaining a visa to finding housing and receiving scholarships. Accessible contact information (email, telephone, physical admittance, etc.).
3. **Ease of registration** – a simple online registration process, accompanied by step-by-step explanations about the requirements and necessary forms. The existence of forms in English and clarifications about the final dates for submission contribute to a positive user experience.
4. **Means of contact and ongoing support** – possibility of communicating via various channels (email, telephone, chat, social media), with a guaranteed quick response. Publishing the contact details of relevant departments or personnel helps students navigate and find the required information reasonably quickly and without frustration.
5. **Frequently Asked Questions list (FAQ)** – a designated page summarizing the essential questions that come up repeatedly, such as: admissions requirements, visas, costs, scholarships, and academic rules. Such a page saves time for candidates, reducing the need to repeatedly contact the service centers.
6. **Identifying the appropriate person/office to contact** – a mechanism directing the foreign student to the suitable entity or point of contact according to subject (e.g., visa application, information about scholarships, housing, etc.). This reduces confusion and quickly connects candidates to the authorized entity.
7. **List of professors in search of advisees** – for candidates looking to conduct research or post-doctorate, it is important to offer an updated list of researchers or labs that recruit students. Such a list makes it easier for candidates to locate a potential adviser, acting as an efficient tool for connecting the parties.

8. **Addressing financial issues (tuition, scholarships, housing)** – clear presentation of study and living costs, details about the various scholarships (internal and external), and explanations about housing options (from dorms to local rental market). This information is essential for budget planning, to ensure that the foreign student can easily understand the financial needs and prepare accordingly.

The following are two successful examples of Israeli universities' websites and information systems intended for international students:

- **Weizmann Institute of Science – Feinberg Graduate School**

The Weizmann Institute of Science has a comprehensive and detailed English website, intended mostly for advanced studies (master's and doctoral), combining comprehensive explanations for international candidates and extensive information about the labs and research fields. The Institute has a supportive international department, assisting foreign students with their visa applications, finding dorm housing, medical insurance, etc. The actual registration process is detailed and conducted online, but it does require locating an adviser, and admission is contingent on meeting the prerequisites. The website also includes an extensive FAQ page addressing general administrative questions, but it does not include an aggregate list of available post-doc positions. Opportunities are sometimes published on the websites of various departments. Nonetheless, it does offer extensive details on financial matters (such as scholarships), including estimated living costs and campus housing options, so candidates can get a clear and full picture before arriving.

- **Hebrew University in Jerusalem – International Office**

The Hebrew University has a comprehensive English website that includes designated pages with extensive guidance for international students, offering multidisciplinary administrative support – from handling visas and scholarships to assistance in housing. The registration process is online and quite simple, and includes an inquiries system or unofficial chat, for preliminary inquiries even before applying. Both the registration office and international office can be contacted directly by email or telephone. The website also has a general FAQ page, providing answers for frequently asked questions by advanced students. It also has an aggregate post-doc list, and guides for locating advisers and designated scholarships. In addition, the website offers specifications about scholarships, tuition, and campus housing options – including direct contact to the dorms.

For inspiration and examples of good websites, we recommend looking at the websites of leading foreign universities. For instance, [MIT Office of Graduate Education](#): the website includes detailed FAQ pages, a search engine for scholarships and study programs, employment, guidance on bureaucratic issues (visas, housing), etc.

In conclusion, encouraging the arrival of foreign students and scholars to Israel is significant academically as well as from a political and international image standpoint: it extends circles of international relationships, enhances scientific innovation, and offers a real alternative to BDS-supporting voices. On the practical level, an accessible website, detailed information, and bureaucratic processes made easily accessible are essential components in increasing the number of foreign applicants and turning them into positive ambassadors of Israeli academia around the world.

## 5. Recommendations for Decision Makers

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The academic boycott of Israel presents Israeli academia with significant challenges in the international arena, and impacts the ability of Israeli universities and researchers to integrate in the global scientific space. Reports obtained as part of this project indicate increased adverse impact on collaborations, research relationships, fundraising, and mobility of Israeli students and faculty. This phenomenon exceeds the academic field, and reflects the potential of the BDS movement to influence all aspects of life in Israel.

Addressing this complex reality requires a multidisciplinary approach that combines public advocacy efforts, strengthening international relationships, cultivating research collaborations, and coping with the local implications of BDS. This chapter presents a line of recommendations for various levels of decision makers, from national leadership to individual faculty members. These suggestions focus on practical steps which adoption may improve Israel's academic status and neutralize or mitigate the impacts of BDS.

### 5.1 National-level recommendations

Fighting in the media and academic arenas is a multidimensional and complex challenge steeped in deep-seated cultural and political tensions. To combat the intense and unrelenting efforts of anti-Israeli elements, and the internal frustration they generate locally, a consistent and decisive strategic approach is required. Israeli universities must formulate a multi-channel public advocacy strategy, implementing a comprehensive and effective response on the international stage.

#### 1. Improving the national public advocacy system

Discussions about Israeli advocacy have been a staple of Israeli discourse for many years. They are usually rife with harsh self-criticism and claims of Israeli advocacy efforts' continued failure. In contrast, some claim that the geopolitical circumstances Israel has been facing over the past 50 years and more, ever since its victory in the Six Day War, are such that Israel cannot possibly win. Instead of investing valuable time and effort on fruitless discussions of the past, we must focus on the future: learning from past mistakes to improve the public advocacy system, adapting it to the current reality in which social media plays a role at least as important as traditional media channels (certainly among the younger generations); striving to actively participate in international forums related to AI regulation, including OECD forums, to promote global AI standards; ensuring coordination between national media entities (government spokespersons, IDF spokesperson, and others); planning and executing

proactive advocacy in the form of various campaigns, rather than only reactive advocacy that responds to current developments.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is meant to receive a significant budgetary addition as of 2025, specifically for this purpose. The Ministry should allocate a certain part of its resources to globally advocate Israeli academia's contribution to the promotion of all Mankind, beyond its contribution to purely Israeli interests – in life sciences, agriculture, food, transportation, communication, artificial intelligence, etc. Academia-related campaigns should be coordinated with Israeli academia, so that it can provide relevant data and its infrastructures and faculty capabilities can be presented to the world.

Leaving the academic stage to BDS supporters without a suitable Israeli response will be a severe strategic error. A targeted, methodical, and ongoing intervention is therefore required, to ensure active and influential Israeli presence in international discourse.

## **2. Collaborating with Organizations that Act Against BDS and Antisemitism**

One reason for anti-BDS actions not realizing their full potential is the current separation into many dozens of entities and organizations, each operating according to its own agenda, not necessarily coordinated or even connected in any way to other organizations. It is a classic example of “too many cooks in the kitchen”. Therefore, relationships must be strengthened with organizations and associations like the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Combat Antisemitism, Elnet, and others, which lead the international fight against antisemitism. Such organizations recognize that the activity of the BDS movement directly contributes to increased antisemitism on campuses and in the public sphere in general.

To create an effective collaboration with these organizations, the government should consider establishing a coordinating and guiding entity to maintain regular contact with them, pass on information, data, testimonies and requests for action, allowing them to take action according to their abilities (such as legal proceedings against entities and individuals who violate local laws by promoting BDS activities). Such a collaboration will increase awareness to the fight and its effectiveness, and will enhance international protection on Israeli academia. Establishing a regularly convening forum, consisting of representatives of relevant organizations and other stakeholders, will enable systematic sharing of effective practices and mutual learning, thus enhancing the influence of each participant based on field experience.

## **3. Encouraging Jewish Organizations to Conduct Pro-Israeli Activity on Campus**

Jewish and Israeli organizations like Hillel, IAC, and others should be encouraged to expand their pro-Israeli activity on campuses with a significant presence of BDS supporters, in

collaboration with Israeli students and faculty. Activity should focus on holding quiet and respectful events with a coherent value-oriented message, targeted at diverse audiences. The purpose of these initiatives is to cultivate open discourse, build bridges of understanding, and strengthen support for Israel in the academic arena.

#### **4. Generating Alternate Sources and Opportunities for Research Resources and Scientific Training**

Harnessing both philanthropic foundations and government ministries to generate substantial alternative monetary resources for research in general, and particularly for research in new and emerging fields, which will also promote Israel's global scientific and technological standing. One such example is the newly established Mavri program, a collaboration of the Israel Science Foundation, the Planning and Budgeting Committee, and two large philanthropic foundations, for the promotion of Israeli medical research and for creating opportunities for the establishment of life sciences startups out of Israel's medical institutions.

The government should encourage and support programs such as Kalaniyot, which was independently established at MIT and is now aspiring to establish similar tracks in other leading north American universities. Similar programs should be encouraged in Europe as well, as much as possible. Assistance can be provided through partial financial support for Israeli postdoctoral students and fellows going on sabbatical abroad, who in collaboration with Jewish organizations will also serve as good-will ambassadors and on-campus advocates.

#### **5. Support for an entity to continuously address the issue**

The BDS movement has been active for about three decades and is expected to remain active for many years to come. To ensure an appropriate response, Israel must establish an entity to permanently collect and analyze information, coordinating and instructing the various relevant entities (government ministries, universities, NGOs, volunteers, etc.) – all according to a well-established, coordinated national strategy.

It is recommended that this entity establishes a dynamic infrastructure for real-time response. This can be achieved by establishing a virtual “situation room” for regular and ongoing monitoring of academic BDS instances (see below, Dashboard), by offering tools to address predefined situations, and by providing the option to interact with a human element for ad-hoc consultation when the standard toolbox cannot offer a relevant response.

It is also recommended that this entity establishes worldwide networks for fighting academic BDS. Such networks can be informal circles of pro-Israeli researches in certain countries or



universities, in collaboration with Israeli researchers who speak the language or who are alumni, like the Italian Accademia-Italia-Israele network, or like the initiative formed to prevent a BDS resolution against all Israeli universities from passing in the Sorbonne.

Insights into establishing such networks:

#### A. Identifying and establishing a support base

- Identifying researchers and supporters: identifying local researchers or language-speakers with a link to Israel, who are willing to participate.
- Creating small and active groups: keeping the group at an effective size (50-200 members), to allow intimate discourse and effective activity.

#### B. Strategic focus

- Defining clear goals: focus on preventing boycotts and disseminating pro-Israeli messages.
- Supporting pro-Israeli public figures/scientists/celebrities (emphasis on those outside the Jewish community): providing a safe platform for discussions, especially in countries with an anti-Israeli climate in academia.

#### C. Collaboration with official and non-official elements

- Obtaining support from embassies: establishing relationships with Israel embassies in the relevant countries, for support in funding and information.
- Collaborating with senior academics and politicians: harnessing sympathetic and philanthropic local entities to influence decision makers in academia.
- Collaborating with legal entities: consulting and utilizing the necessary expertise to fight BDS decisions by legal means, as necessary.

#### D. Effective action

- Preserving and cultivating personal relationships: identifying influential individuals within the universities who have a personal relationship with Israeli academics (e.g., former school mates), and contacting them via their friends in Israel, to harness them to act against BDS and to identify and expand the network of potential local partners.
- Focused response: identifying instances of local BDS initiatives so that they can be targeted and prevented, e.g., preventing proposals in the university senate.
- Regular monitoring and information sharing: creating effective systems for real-time field monitoring and information sharing, to prevent attempts to quickly and underhandedly pass resolutions to BDS Israeli universities, without formally declaring them on the agenda.

- E. Continued collection and analysis of data by the IFS, as the national authority with the capacity to collect data in its field in real time, and detect trends (like the willingness of world scholars to review research works from Israel). Continued collection and analysis of data by the Ministry of Science's Innovation Authority (specifically ISERD), about participation in European projects and research grants.
- F. Unique content: creating unique pro-Israeli content or courses, like the history of Zionism, innovation and entrepreneurship, etc., which can interest a local audience.
  - Changing the discourse: emphasizing that an academic boycott is antithetical to free academia values.
- G. Understanding and adapting to local needs
  - Learning from the field: each country, and sometimes even each district within a certain country, has unique characteristics that should be considered when planning anti-BDS activities. This necessitates regular discourse with relevant local entities, in order to understand the needs, challenges, and possibilities that are unique to that specific country or area.
  - Adapting to size: adapting the network size to local circumstances (e.g., a single-university network may be suitable in the US).
  - Maintaining a sense of urgency
  - Quick reaction to events: using anti-Israeli calls or events as a catalyst for stirring the network to action and increasing the members' sense of commitment and belonging.

## 6. Preparation for Academic BDS Scenarios

Even if all the suggested measures are implemented, academic BDS can still lead to certain doors being closed for Israeli researchers and universities. It is therefore necessary to prepare for such scenarios by allocating governmental resources for developing independent research infrastructures in Israel. While facilities like CERN cannot be duplicated due to their immense cost, there are many other research infrastructures that can be established and maintained locally. Collaborations between universities, with the government's support, will enable the creation of a common pool of facilities, which will ensure the availability of advanced infrastructures to all researchers in Israel, and will help reduce Israeli academia's dependency on foreign institutions and funds.

These conclusions emphasize the importance of strategic collaborations in the academic arena, including generating new ones and maintaining the existing ones, despite the challenges.

## 5.2 University-level recommendations

### 1. Improving Israel's public relations system:

Fighting in the media and academic arenas constitutes a multidimensional and complex challenge steeped in deep-seated cultural and political tensions. To combat the intense and unrelenting efforts of BDS supporters, and the internal frustration they generate locally, a consistent and decisive strategic approach is required. Israeli universities must formulate a multi-channel public advocacy strategy, implementing a comprehensive and effective response on the international stage.

The suggested approach necessitates choosing skilled and trained representatives to appear in world campuses, exhausting a variety of legitimate platforms to disseminate the message. Identifying and recruiting potential public-advocacy agents – like influential Israeli and Jewish professors, talented Israeli students with a good control of the foreign language they will use for advocacy, and others – is a key component of this strategy. To allow them to become an effective bridge of communication, they need professional training, analytical tools, up-to-date information, and accurate data. Training select students to become opinion leaders on social media can prove to be a highly effective mechanism for increasing impact on the younger generation, while disseminating value-oriented messaging using authentic language and content that is relevant for target audiences.

### 2. Proactive steps to strengthen and expand research collaborations and student exchanges

Opportunities for research collaborations and student mobility programs should be identified and prioritized, with emphasis on the initiatives with the most potential for benefit. Large foundations under Jewish ownerships in the US and other countries, established specifically to support Israel, can be a substantial resource for promoting such initiatives.

It is imperative to design collaborations to target not only Israel's natural audience – Jewish students and faculty – but also academics from wider circles that are not usually exposed to direct contact with Israel. This approach will contribute to expanding academic relationships, to building new scientific bridges, and to enhancing Israel's international status in the academic world.

There is room to utilize available digital tools to effectively reach different target audiences. For example, producing podcasts in which guests from Israel and the world describe the quality of Israeli research, the mutual benefit generated from research project collaborators in Israel and abroad, the experience of student exchanges in Israel, etc. Israel should also invest in network platforms for real time, dynamic dissemination of reactions and messages.

Academic collaborations should be expanded beyond the traditional destinations Israeli academia is accustomed to (mainly North America and western Europe), to countries such as India, South Korea, Singapore, Japan, and the Czech Republic. These countries are home to advanced research institutions and leading scholars, including some that are rated higher than their Israeli counterparts in international quality rankings. So far, these countries have not been significantly impacted by BDS activity and academic boycotts of Israel, and can therefore be expected to exhibit more willingness and good will to promote shared interests. Collaborating with these countries will open up new opportunities, contribute to promoting scientific innovation, and help minimize Israel's dependence on traditional "markets".

At the same time, continued efforts to preserve and promote the ties between Israeli academic institutions and leading institutions in north America and western Europe should not be abandoned. In this context, it would be advisable to choose our battles, and plan where to focus our efforts. Despite the protracted difficulty and frustration of this campaign, we must remember that Israeli academia still has allies even where the levels of hatred and aggression against us have skyrocketed (Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, and others), and they can and should be utilized. These may be leading faculty members, important donors, government officials, and others.

### **3. Inviting Renowned Academic Leaders to Israel**

Traditional academic tools, such as granting honorary degrees to Nobel prize winners and others, or allocating designated funds for hosting lecturers in seminars and conferences, can serve as an effective means of getting first-rate Jewish and non-Jewish opinion leaders to visit Israeli universities. We would also suggest to consider creating an "academic freedom" prize, supported by a philanthropically funded foundation, to be awarded each year to prominent figures who bravely stood against BDS and did not surrender to its demands. During their visits, such guests will be exposed to Israeli innovation and research capabilities, and meet researchers from a variety of leading disciplines. Such positive experiences can yield long-term benefits by creating a network of academic ambassadors who will promote Israel's image in their own campuses, and will facilitate the creation of more scientific collaborations with local institutions and researchers.

### **4. Improving "user experience" for foreign guests and students**

To assist in the efforts to attract as many students, fellows, and academic guests from abroad, as well as Jewish students who are considering leaving campuses where they feel prosecuted and detested and completing their studies in Israel, the universities need to improve their level of service for such audiences. An examination made as part of this project revealed that the websites of most Israeli universities (excluding Weizmann Institute – the only positive

exception in this regard), intended specifically for students or postdoctoral scholars interested in enrolling for studies or research in universities, are quite far from the standard customary in leading western universities. The examination found missing information, contradictory information, information available only in Hebrew and not fully accessible in English, etc. The same is true for campus signage, administrative staff's English proficiency, variety of English courses, etc. As BDS supporters are attempting to hinder the arrival of international students to Israel, we must go above and beyond to be as attractive as possible to those who consider coming despite the protests and objections they must be exposed to in their origin countries.

## **5. Disciplinary action against Israeli faculty members who join calls for BDS**

Over the years, there have been some instances of Israeli faculty members explicitly and bluntly joining the calls for academic BDS against Israel. Prominent examples include Ilan Pappé from Haifa University and Neve Gordon from Ben Gurion University. While this phenomenon is quite marginal in its extent, it holds an immense potential for harm, as each of these cases is echoed and disseminated by the BDS movement, which uses it to justify its actions with the argument that they are supported even within Israel. This is a particularly sensitive issues due to its link to freedom of speech and thought – principles that are held sacred in academic discourse. Due to this sensitivity, Israeli universities found it difficult to address the issue, or were delayed in responding to it, with considerable damage already having been caused in the intervening time. Failure to address this issue has implications on our ability to continue acting against BDS abroad. Various foreign entities have often argued “how can you complain about us when similar things are happening in your own home, and you do nothing?”.

Responses should start with the university's ethical code and end with its disciplinary regulations. Firstly, we recommend that Israeli universities adopt the IHRA definitions as an integral part of their ethical code, while addressing aspects relevant to the various populations comprising the higher education system. Such action will align Israeli universities with many universities in the world (particularly in north American and western Europe) that have already adopted it. Secondly, we recommend that the ethical code will include a declaration that will clearly differentiate between the right of every faculty member to freely express his or her opinion on any issue, even if it contains scathing criticism about any university policy, public policy, or government policy, and between proactive steps by a faculty member that can cause actual damage to the university as an institution and to the member's colleagues as individuals, such as a public call to boycott the institution in which the faculty member is employed or other Israeli academic institutions. Such a call should be considered a violation of the ethical code. Finally, all this should be integrated into the

disciplinary regulations, to include various levels of sanctions that can be imposed on violators of the ethical code.

### **5.3 Recommendations on the individual faculty member level**

Traditional academic tools, such as granting honorary degrees or allocating designated funding, can serve as an effective means of inviting first-rate non-Jewish opinion leaders, like Nobel laureates, to visit Israeli universities. During their visits, they will be exposed to Israeli innovation and research capabilities, and meet researchers from a variety of leading disciplines. Such positive experiences can yield long-term benefits by creating a network of academic ambassadors who will promote Israel's image in their own campuses, and will facilitate the creation of more scientific collaborations with local institutions and researchers.

#### **1. Preparation for Academic Visits Abroad**

We recommend that Israeli faculty and students who go abroad for various purposes (participation in a conference, postdoc, fellowship, etc.) invest time in collecting information about BDS-activity in their destination. This information will be made available on the Neaman Institute website, and can of course be further researched by independently searching open information sources, by corresponding with the hosting entity at the destination, etc.

It is also recommended to be acquainted with the local entities that can be contacted in case of any issue. Such entities may include the Israeli embassy or consulate, NGOs and organizations that deal with antisemitism and academic BDS on or off campus, local law firms that volunteer to assist in cases of harassment by BDS supporters, etc. This information will also be made available on the Neaman Institute website in the near future.

#### **2. Credible Real-Time Reporting**

We can compare the system for addressing BDS phenomena to apps like Waze for assisting road users. The more reports the system receives, the more it can provide better results overall, and the more current the reports, the greater the chances of successfully addressing the specific problem the reporter encountered.

For reporting to be effective, it must adhere to the facts. However, in light of the implicit BDS phenomenon where it is often difficult to prove that it was indeed an act of BDS, it is appropriate to report incidents perceived as BDS only if they deviate from previous normative conduct.

### 3. Proactive Steps to Preserve and Expand International Ties

Every Israeli faculty members has an international network of colleagues, former school friends, collaborators on articles, etc. Much like any social network, this network as well requires ongoing “maintenance” work. In the current circumstances, in which the BDS movement against Israel has garnered substantial momentum, Israeli faculty members should increase their efforts to preserve and even expand their own networks. The chance of colleagues joining an explicit or implicit act of BDS is smaller the more frequent the contact with them.

Sending doctoral students for short periods of study abroad is an efficient tool for maintaining relationships with foreign colleagues and fighting academic BDS. The mere presence of doctoral students is a blow for BDS supporters. In the longer term, these stints abroad increase these doctoral students’ chances of finding a suitable postdoc position in the future.

It is highly recommended to try and extend each faculty member’s personal network to several universities in different countries or states, to minimize the risk of a network mostly based on colleagues from a single university (like the university in which the member conducted their doctorate or postdoc) being influenced by pressure from BDS supporters.

## 6. Research Products – Generating Toolbox

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The research team had created a list of tools intended to assist the academic community and decision makers to make data-based decisions in order to optimize and streamline their coping with academic BDS incidents.

These research products include:

1. A **Dashboard** that presents an up-to-date situation report at any given time, based on accumulated data up to that point
2. **Tools on the project website** <https://www.neaman.org.il/project/scholar-shield>:
  - Practical toolbox: links to foreign organizations that may assist in some BDS incidents or in enhancing relationships (at the time of report publication, the relevant countries are the US and Australia), and suggested letter templates for contacting journal editors
  - List of organizations, data, and select incidents
  - List of petitions against academic BDS
  - List of pertinent articles, reports, and news items
  - List of declarations by universities and professional organizations
  - Articles written by the research team

## 7. Summary

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### 7.1 Interpretation of Findings

The findings presented in the current report undoubtedly indicate a considerable increase in the extent of attempts to impose various types of boycotts on Israeli academia since October 7 2023. BDS initiatives are aimed at Israeli academic institutions, at Israeli faculty and students, and at other elements that are in some way affiliated with Israeli academia.

Though not to be discounted, the harm caused so far by BDS actions has been fairly limited and mainly impacted individuals – faculty members whose articles were rejected for publication for BDS reasons, or whose lectures in foreign conferences or universities were cancelled for BDS reasons, others whose promotions were inhibited because reviewers refused to provide colleague evaluation for BDS reasons, and more.



It seems that at least up to the date of this report, no essential impact on academic institutions in Israel was recorded. While there were isolated incidents where programs for shared activities were cancelled (student exchanges, collaborative research projects, etc.), these did not constitute an essential impact that reduces the Israeli universities' global standing or their ability to realize their research and teaching roles.

In contravention of the few instances of agreement cancellation or non-renewal, or of refraining from collaborating with Israeli academic institutions for the purpose of some activity, there was a much larger number of positive initiatives for new research collaborations, including identifying appropriate funding sources. Besides these initiatives, there was also an impressive number and quality of participants in solidarity delegations from various world universities, who visited Israel and supported its academic institutions. Nonetheless, in light of the escalation observed in BDS phenomena outside the US, along with a significant increase in reports of implicit or explicit academic BDS instances, mostly in European countries, it is safe to assume that the extent of damage to Israeli academic institutions will only be revealed down the road.

Another important finding pertains to the composition of protests and hostilities against Israel and its academic institutions. In the vast majority of cases, we can clearly see that BDS initiatives and expressions of hostility originate from undergraduates. While initial reactions by university governing bodies were quite feeble, managements and their governing councils gradually, and especially once public pressure increased, took a harder line that emphasized the importance of academic collaboration as an integral part of the basic values of any university. This position generated many conflicts between university managements and the students, which in some cases even necessitated law enforcement involvement to restore order to campuses in which students took violent action, trampling their university's code of conduct and ignoring calls for restraint by university management. One bright spot in this finding is the way most universities where BDS initiatives against Israel were taken stood firm against them. Yet it also reveals a threatening shadow for the future – the undergraduates of today will be the leaders of universities and the general public in 20 years. If nothing is done to change their minds, it is certainly possible that in time, Israeli universities will find themselves increasingly isolated from the rest of the world.

Unsurprisingly, the intensity of academic BDS attempts was particularly high in the humanities and social sciences, and lower in exact sciences, engineering, and technology. This phenomenon is well known from dozens of years of BDS activity, during which it gained much more traction in the so-called “soft” sciences, and did not gain a significant hold in exact sciences and engineering, where Israeli academia has an excellent reputation as highly worthy of collaboration in light of the mutual benefits produced by such collaborations. It should also be noted that the distribution of collected reports is not completely proportionate

to the size of Israeli universities and colleges (if hostility towards Israeli academia was uniform, we would have expected a correlation between reports and university size in terms of number of students and faculty members). For example, Ariel University that is located beyond the 1967 Green Line, draws much more “fire” than other similarly-sized universities.

Only two thirds of respondents to the Samuel Neaman Institute survey consented to have their report data shared with others. This indicates the academics’ implicit concern of further damage that may be caused by exposing their data. This is a worrying finding that gives rise to questions about the moral resilience of the academic communities in which such concerns fester. The basic rules of academic ethics emphasize academia’s impartial and unbiased striving for pure scientific truth. A situation in which researchers are concerned about possible harm from colleagues, following the exposure of their complaint about the conduct of individuals or institutions within the community, attests to an academic culture that is contradictory to the basic principles of academia.

At this point, it is hard to judge the long-term efficacy of the various steps taken so far by the State of Israel, the universities, and other elements, as part of the fight against academic BDS. Public advocacy undoubtedly was and will remain an important tool that requires ongoing investment, and public advocacy content can undoubtedly be improved in terms of how it is used and presented to different publics. However, public advocacy alone is clearly insufficient, and a series of proactive steps must be taken to preserve the academic relationships formed before October 7 2023, and to enhance and add to them, to prevent adverse impacts and to thwart attempts to boycott Israeli academia. Israel should also examine additional steps to make boycott organizers pay some price for their actions.

Finally, the impact of academic BDS, and especially the implicit ones, may manifest in the long term and over time. Even when the sounds of war finally fade, it is safe to assume that explicit and implicit actions of academic BDS of Israel will continue, thus requiring a constant and long-term monitoring of their potential impact on scientific and academic variables and indicators that determine the country’s scientific and technological quality and resilience.

## 7.2 Study Limitations

While the research, based on the information received by regular monitoring of academic BDS in its deepest and widest-spread sense and on data mining from relevant sources, depends on information management skills and ongoing updating of information, the research that is based on field data depends on various factors that are not necessarily centrally controlled.

The information collected during 2024-2025 and is still being collected out of cyberspace excels in being highly in-depth and diverse in terms of driving forces and stakeholders – publications on behalf of various populations within universities and the general academic

arena: student associations, faculty organizations, managements including governing councils, investment committees, etc.; publications and public statements on behalf of both scientific and political national bodies; private organizations; ad-hoc initiatives; all based on search definitions that cast a wide net on one hand, and are as accurate as possible on the other. The result is a wide-angle perspective on academic BDS, allowing for characterizations, understanding, and insights about motives, initiatives, manners of action, and effective and less effective counteraction, all as a basis for recommendations for comprehensively and holistically addressing various aspects of the phenomenon. However, an important information source that has not yet been handled thoroughly is social media. Much of the discourse, particularly that of field activists and their organizers, takes place in cyberspace, and much information about attitudes, indoctrination methods, and action plans is undoubtedly unrepresented in the current research. These communication networks are currently the main action space of young individuals, and ongoing and updating informational research must address both the obtainment of data from this space and its utilization in efforts to combat and prevent academic BDS.

Nonetheless, the study's main limitation is obtaining authentic and dynamic information over time from the Israeli academic field. While obtaining formal data about macro impacts of BDS incidents on publications, research grants, and global academic status is fairly simple, information about institutional and particularly individual incidents of academic BDS provides only a general indication of trends and not a credible and up-to-date perspective of the situation. Lacking a governing statutory authority, reporting data about institution-level incidents is completely voluntary and therefore not necessarily representative. It is even more complex to obtain data about individual incidents pertaining to faculty members. While the Samuel Neaman Institute distributed the study questionnaire, which was assembled in a professional manner, the institutions distributed internal questionnaires in an effort to obtain immediate and quick information, which significantly harmed cooperation with the study questionnaire. The information obtained from this collection of internal questionnaires, while largely pertinent to the data collected by the study questionnaire, was complex to scientifically analyze in a uniform manner. While the body of knowledge created by all reports provided an overall indication of individual academic BDS phenomena, it was undoubtedly just the tip of the iceberg, severely limiting the ability to draw conclusions. This limitation is even stronger in the face of covert or implicit BDS. To glean clearer and deeper insights about the scope and mainly about the nature of this phenomenon, a relatively large number of reports is necessary. The current study is extremely limited in its capacity to provide an opinion on this matter.

Finally, any study, and particularly a study of dynamic real-time events, is by nature relevant to the period in which it was conducted. The current study provides data and insight to draw interim conclusions and recommendations for various fundamental actions. To address the

issue in depth, and certainly to formulate actions for its prevention, will require consistent and prolonged monitoring and analysis of trends in both online information, including social media, and in from-the-field incidents in Israeli universities, all in a centralized, organized, and regulated manner.

## Future Research

Several other directions of research intended for implementation in 2025:

- Developing computerized information retrieval tools to allow fully automated monitoring of relevant information about academic BDS activities and counteractions, from the internet and social media. Engaging M.A. students to conduct their research thesis on this subject.
- Developing methods of analyzing the negative dynamic that characterizes academic BDS actions – an attempt to understand how a certain event affects academic BDS activities in different geographic spaces, how a shock wave forms and gains momentum like a snow ball, with each individual move fanning the flames, encouraging and escalating the next moves, etc. Simultaneously, understanding how a positive dynamic of curbing the negative drift against Israeli academia can be created – from a single event or a series of connected events that together form a solid barrier against academic BDS.
- Developing predictive models for future use, to predict outbreaks of BDS efforts following certain actions that will or will not be taken in our region. The models will rely on the information collected so far, and their precision will of course increase as the database grows larger.

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Our sincere apologies if we have unintentionally omitted others who should have been included.

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## 10. Appendixes

### 10.1 Project Team

Table 9: Project Team

Researcher Name	Role	Email
<b>Prof. Boaz Golany</b>	Study leader	golany@technion.ac.il
<b>Prof. Rivka Carmi</b>	Study leader	rcarmi@bgu.ac.il
<b>Tsipy Buchnik, PhD</b>	Researcher	zipibu@sni.technion.ac.il
<b>Ms. Oshrat Katz Shacham</b>	Researcher	oshrat@sni.technion.ac.il
<b>Ms. Ella Barzani</b>	Researcher	ella@sni.technion.ac.il
<b>Mr. Golan Tamir</b>	Information systems manager	golan@sni.technion.ac.il

### 10.2 List of Interviewees

The following is a list of VPs with whom we have met:

Table 10: Interviewed vice presidents of international affairs

University	Role	Name	Meeting Date
Ariel University	Head of International Affairs Unit	Prof. Konstantin Borodianskiy	08/11/2024
Ben-Gurion University	Vice President for Global Engagement	Prof. Michal Bar-Asher Siegal	08/11/2024
Haifa University	Vice President for Global Engagement	Prof. Tally Katz-Gerro	08/11/2024
Tel Aviv University	Vice President, International Academic Collaboration	Prof. Millette Shamir	08/20/2024

University	Role	Name	Meeting Date
Bar Ilan University	Vice President	Prof. Moshe Weinstein	08/20/2024
Technion	Vice President	Oded Rabinovitch	8/22/2024
Hebrew University	Vice President for International Affairs	Oron Shagrir	10/09/2024

Table 11: Interviewed vice presidents for research

University	Role	Name	Meeting Date
Technion	Vice President for Research	Prof. Noam Adir	8/15/2024
Ben-Gurion University	Vice President and Dean for Research and Development	Prof. Raz Jelinek	8/15/2024
Open University	Dean of Research	Prof. Ofer Reany	8/15/2024
Weizmann Institute of Science	Vice President	Prof. Michal Neeman	07/03/2024 (reply in writing)

In addition to VPs, the research team spoke with leading individuals in Israeli academia, including Prof. Yoseph Mekori, Dr. Naomi Beck, chair of Planning and Budgeting Committee, and Prof. Daniel Zajfman, former Weizmann Institute President.

## 10.3 Form for Reporting an Academic BDS Incident

### Reporting an Academic BDS Incident

Since the Hamas attack on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, there has been an increase in reports of anti-Israel activities on campuses worldwide. The Samuel Neaman Institute for National Policy Research has established a task force whose purpose is to collect data on academic boycott activities worldwide, analyze it and suggest ways to confront it. To support the team, the Neaman Institute has created an infrastructure over time and from various sources.

The following questionnaire aims to assist the task force in gathering information about this phenomenon and its scope, enabling analysis, insights and recommendations for action.

If you have experienced or encountered an academic BDS incident, we would appreciate your participation in filling out the questionnaire.

Your contribution to this research is important!

Please note that all information received from the questionnaire will be used solely by the Samuel Institute team for processing and analysis purposes. No personal data will be shared with external entities without your explicit consent. The Samuel Institute is committed to full confidentiality and protection.

Best regards,

Boaz Golany, Senior Research Fellow at the Samuel Neaman Institute and Professor at the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology

Rivka Carmi, Senior Research Fellow at the Samuel Neaman Institute and Emeritus Professor at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

For more information and a list of useful sources, visit the project page on the Neaman Institute website: <https://www.neaman.org.il/EN/SCHOLAR-SHIELD>

There are 59 questions in this survey.

#### Personal details

##### Academic affiliation:

\*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

☐

Israeli university

☐

Israeli college

☐

Academic institute outside Israel

☐

Other

##### Israeli university name:

\*

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was ' Israeli university

' at question '[G01Q03]' (Academic affiliation: )

Please choose **only one** of the following:

☐

Ariel University

☐

Bar-Ilan University

☐

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

☐

Reichman University

☐

Technion – Israel Institute of Technology

☐

Tel-Aviv University

☐

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

☐

The Open University of Israel

☐

The University of Haifa

☐

The Weizmann Institute of Science

☐

Other

##### Israeli College name:

\*

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was ' Israeli college

' at question '[G01Q03]' (Academic affiliation: )

Please write your answer here:

##### Name of academic institute outside Israel:

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was ' Academic institute outside Israel

' at question '[G01Q03]' (Academic affiliation: )

Please write your answer here:

**Academic field:**

\*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ Humanities (general)  
☐ Languages, Literature, and Regional Studies  
☐ Education and Teacher Training  
☐ Art, Fine Arts, and Applied Arts  
☐ Social Sciences  
☐ Business and Management Sciences  
☐ Law  
☐ Medicine  
☐ Health Professions  
☐ Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science  
☐ Physical Sciences  
☐ Biological Sciences and Agriculture  
☐ Engineering and Architecture  
☐ Other

**Technological/Scientific fields: (Cyber, Artificial Intelligence, Computer Science, ...)**

Please write your answer here:

**Academic rank:**

\*

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ Postdoctoral Researcher  
☐ Physician / Medical Resident/Intern  
☐ Doctoral Student  
☐ Master's Student  
☐ Bachelor's Student  
☐ Faculty Staff  
☐ Other

**Incident details**

Please answer all the following questions for one specific event. After completing all the questions for this event, you will be given the option to add another event.

**Is the incident related to -**

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ Research  
☐ Teaching or student activity  
☐ Other

**Which type of research?**

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Research' at question ' [G02Q26] (Is the incident related to - )

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ Basic research  
☐ Applied research  
☐ Clinical research  
☐ Other research (please specify in incident description)  
☐ The incident is not research related  
☐ Other

**Which type of activity?**

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Teaching or student activity' at question ' [G02Q26] (Is the incident related to - )

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ Teaching/Lecturing  
☐ Student exchange  
☐ Joint student project  
☐ Prevention of participation in student activity  
☐ Other

**Please choose the event arena and indicate its name (if applicable):**

\*

Choose one of the following answers  
Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ Conference
- ☐ Journal
- ☐ University/Campus event
- ☐ Project / Research group
- ☐ Clinical research
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐ Grant / Research fund
- ☐ Country/State-level boycott
- ☐ Offensive email/post
- ☐ Other
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

**Please specify the name of the organization/institution according to your choice in the previous question**

Please write your answer here:

**Category:**

\*

Choose one of the following answers  
Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ Cancellation/prevention of participation
- ☐ Rejection/refusal of publication
- ☐ Non-attribution (failure to give credit)
- ☐ Economic boycott (call for divestment)
- ☐ Internship rejection
- ☐ Verbal abuse
- ☐ Physical violence
- ☐ Other (please specify in incident description)
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

**The country/State in which the incident accrued:**

Contry Name

United States:

Europe:

Other:

**Date on which the event occurred/identified:**

\*

Please enter a date:

**Is the BDS explicit or implicit? (if there is a reference in writing, please attach it)**

Choose one of the following answers  
Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ Explicit BDS incident (It was explicitly stated or written that the incident is related to the researcher's Israeli affiliation)
- ☐ Implicit BDS incident (It was not explicitly stated or written that the incident is related to the researcher's Israeli affiliation)
- ☐ Other (please specify in incident description)



**Please assess the personal impact on academic promotion or research following the reported incident:**

\*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ No impact at all  
☐ Minor impact  
☐ Moderate impact  
☐ Significant impact  
☐ Highly significant impact

**Was there a specific individual who led the event (editor, dean, research group leader, department head, etc.)? If so, please specify**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

Make a comment on your choice here:

**Incident description:**

Please write your answer here:

**Have you attempted to address the incident independently? If so, please specify how and what the outcome was**

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Other

Make a comment on your choice here:

**Do you have any suggestions on how to deal with incidents of academic BDS?**

Please write your answer here:

**Would you expect assistance from your institution or other authorities? What kind of assistance?**

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

Make a comment on your choice here:

**Please attach relevant files to your incident report**

Please upload at most 5 files  
Kindly attach the aforementioned documents along with the survey

**Do you authorize the transfer of the incident report to a third party for the purpose of informant and/or assessing the possibility of assistance?**

Choose one of the following answers  
Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ I authorize  
☐ I do not authorize

**We appreciate you providing your name and email address.**

This information will be kept confidential and will not be shared with any third party. However, it will allow us to contact you if necessary for additional information or clarification regarding the reported incident.

Please write your answer(s) here:

Name

Email

**Would you like to report another incident? \***

Choose one of the following answers  
Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

## 10.4 Technical Appendix

The project makes use of advanced systems for the collection, processing, and presentation of data, while adhering to strict information security standards. The dashboard is based on Power-BI and allows analysis and visual presentation of information, assisting in data-based decision making.

### Utilized Systems and Tools

- Open-code survey system: the system is used to collect data from survey participants. It is secure and allows custom adaptation of questions and format. The survey is bi-lingual.
- After the data is collected, it is copied to a sharePoint-based website where it is examined and adjusted. The data is then deleted from the survey system for information security reasons. The data is adjusted and converted using SharePoint.
- The processed data is presented via the Dashboard, in Power BI, allowing for visual analysis and presentation of information.

## Work Process

1. Data collection: participants fill out the survey via the survey system.
2. Data copying: data is copied from the survey server to SharePoint, and is deleted for information security once the data transfer is validated.
3. Data processing: the data is adjusted and converted using SharePoint, to adapt it to the required format.
4. Data presentation: processed data is transferred to Power BI, where the Dashboard is constructed to present the information in a clear visual form.

## Information Security

Survey system: secure and based on open code, with advanced security settings. The system is updated once a week, and is fully backed up.

SharePoint: used as an internal database for the survey and research team, with access limited to authorized personnel only.

Power BI: the Dashboard is protected by controlled access authorizations.

Double authentication: all systems include multifactor authentication (MFA) to ensure maximum security of the data.

## Power-BI Dashboard

Internal dashboard: the research team has an internal dashboard that allows them to access in-depth data and advanced analysis.

Public dashboard: in the future, the dashboard will be made available on the project's website, allowing the public to access the data and the study's insights.

Power BI allows connections to hundreds of data sources, including local and cloud-based sources. In the future we will consider connections to global databases. Appealing and interactive visualizations help viewers understand complex data at a single glance, enabling real-time data analysis and immediate insights. The next stage will include using advanced AI capabilities to recognize patterns in the data, create immediate reports, and provide natural language question answering.

## Records of Meetings

The research team's meetings are recorded and summarized by an AI system, ensuring an accurate and detailed record of all discussions and decisions, including task assignment.

### 10.5 Appendix: Antisemitism in Australian Universities | Survey by 5A

A survey conducted between April and July 2024 by the Australian Academic Alliance Against Antisemitism (5A) reveals a troubling situation of increasing antisemitism in academic campuses across Australia, in the wake of Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7 2023.<sup>110</sup> The purpose of the survey was to assess the extent of antisemitism as experienced by Jewish and Israeli students and staff, and their views about the responses of university administrations.

The survey encompassed 548 participants from 30 universities, of which 395 were students and 149 were staff. The sample is not statistically representative, but does provide wide-scale qualitative and quantitative information, including open answers that depict the participants' most significant antisemitic experience.

#### Extent of Antisemitic Experience

The vast majority of participants reported antisemitic experiences with considerable impact on their lives, studies, and work. 67% reported hearing antisemitic comments; and 45% of students stated that they have reduced their class attendance. Antisemitic discourse included historic distortions (e.g., comparing Israel to the Nazis), using Nazi symbols, explicit incitement, and even justification of violence against Jews. Students and staff described feelings of fear, isolation, and social ostracism.

#### Low Sense of Security

Only 38% of students and 36% of staff reported feeling physically safe on campus, and only about 30% reported feeling safe online (including social media). These rates are significantly lower than those of the National Student Safety Survey (2021), in which 84% of non-Jewish Australian students reported feeling safe in universities.

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<sup>110</sup> Special thanks to Dr. Efrat Eilam for sharing the report findings.

5A: Australian Academics Alliance Against Antisemitism. (2024). 2024 Survey of Antisemitism in Australian Universities.

### **Responses by University Administration**

The findings reveal a deep-seated lack of trust among the Jewish population towards university administrations. 60% of students and 54% of staff believe that the universities are not taking enough action against antisemitism. Only 15% of students and 26% of staff consider the existing complaint mechanisms sufficient. Many expressed concerns about submitting complaints for fear of revenge or lack of efficacy.

### **Social and Behavioral Impacts**

Alongside fear of harassment, participants reported a change in behavior – 49% reduced contact with non-Jews, and many hid their Jewish identity. In parallel, 75% of students and 73% of staff reported that internal relations within the universities' Jewish communities have strengthened.

### **Cluster Analysis**

Statistical analysis of the surveyed population identified a distinct group (30% of respondents) who reported an extreme sense of insecurity. Among this group, 93% heard antisemitic discourse, 67% reduced contact with non-Jews, and 63% reported decreased attendance in classes. In contrast, a minority group (8%) reported a complete sense of security with almost no exposure to antisemitism.

### **Conclusions**

The survey illustrates the depth of antisemitism experienced by Jewish individuals on Australian campuses following the October 2023 events, and the sense of abandonment on the part of the institutions themselves. Slow or insufficient responses by university administrations contributed to a tense, dangerous, and sometimes even traumatic atmosphere for Jewish students and staff. The findings enhance the calls for the establishment of an independent supervision mechanism, to examine university responses and ensure a safe and equal environment for Jewish students in academia.



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Academic Boycott

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