

Full Council: 31 July 2018

Administration motion in the name of Cllr Brian Gordon

Boycott the antisemitic BDS movement

On 31st January 2017, Barnet became the first local authority to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)'s definition of antisemitism and its corresponding guidance, which recognises that antisemitism takes many forms including, in certain circumstances, targeting of the State of Israel.

The IHRA's guidance rightly points out that "criticism of Israel similar to that leveled [sic] against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic". However, Council believes the aims, methods, and rhetoric of the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement and believes its go well beyond this, and are consistent with the IHRA's guidance on the definition of antisemitism. Specifically:

- A completely disproportionate focus on the State of Israel to the exclusion of all other territorial disputes and ethnic conflicts in the world, e.g. the Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara, the Chinese occupation of Tibet, or the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus;
- "Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor [sic]";
- Frequently reported incidents of BDS activists "Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions" and "Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism to characterize Israel or Israelis."
- "Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis."

Following similar action being taken by the City Council of Frankfurt am Main, Germany, on 25th August 2017, Council instructs Officers to ensure:

- The London Borough of Barnet does not provide any space or areas for clubs, organizations or even individuals who support the activities of the antisemitic BDS movement.
- The London Borough of Barnet instructs its companies not to provide or rent any space for affiliates, organizations or individuals who support the activities of the antisemitic BDS movement.
- The London Borough of Barnet appeals to landlords of event venues in the borough not to provide or rent any space for clubs, organizations or even individuals who support the activities of the antisemitic BDS movement.

- The London Borough of Barnet does not make any donations or grants to associations, organisations or other groups which support the activities of the antisemitic BDS movement.

- In doing so, Council also reaffirms its commitment to fight all forms of prejudice, whether against religion, race, sex, gender, or age.

Under Full Council Procedure Rule 17.17: if my item is not dealt with by the end of the meeting I ask that it be voted upon at the Council meeting.