



**Australian Friends of Palestine Association**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Palestinian Land Day part of Australian BDS Campaign**

Palestinian Land Day, which is commemorated every year on 30 March, is now an important part of the growing international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel for its treatment of the Palestinians. Palestinian Land Day marks the day six Arab citizens of Israel were killed by the Israeli army and police in the general strike of 1976.

They were demonstrating against the Israeli government's announcement earlier in March 1976 of its plan to expropriate more than six million square metres of Arab-owned land in Galilee. This official Israeli strategy aimed at the Israeli takeover of Galilee has since been extended to cover the expropriation of many other millions of square metres of Palestinian land in the West Bank, a strategy that has been condemned around the world but continues with impunity.

Israel's implementation of such land expropriation by which colonies known internationally as "settlements" are established on Palestinian agricultural land or by which Israeli Jews move permanently into Palestinian houses in the West Bank while their Arab owners are out for the day, violate United Nations resolutions that make those practices illegal. If the Israeli government does not care about such infringement and illegality, civil society around the world does. Protests and demonstrations against the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from their own land are held constantly in most countries of the world as they will be this week to mark Palestinian Land Day.

In Adelaide over the past six months, the Australian Friends of Palestine Association (AFOPA) has held weekly protests in the Rundle Mall against the existence of an Israeli cosmetics company called "Seacret", which has a retail outlet in the Myer Centre. AFOPA Chairperson, Paul Heywood-Smith QC says "these protests are part of the world-wide BDS campaign against Israel's ongoing illegal occupation of Palestine and the oppression of the human rights of the Palestinians that is perpetrated on a daily basis by the Israeli government. Palestinian Land Day reminds us of the intent of Israel, which is the expropriation of all of Palestine and the cleansing from there of its indigenous people, the Palestinians".

The BDS protests against "Seacret" began on 8 October 2010 in Adelaide and are conducted every Friday night. Mr Heywood-Smith says that "like the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign decades ago against the Apartheid state of South Africa, which denied human rights to the black people of that country and imprisoned activists such as Nelson Mandela, this BDS campaign against Israel is aimed to hit where it hurts – Israel's economy. Israeli businesses are part of that economy and as such are targeted world-wide. The Adelaide BDS campaign has been successful in putting pressure on the Unley and Colonnades Shopping Centres, to close down the "Seacret" outlets in both places and thousands of South Australian shoppers are now aware of the international BDS campaign."

For further information, contact AFOPA on [secretary@afopa.com.au](mailto:secretary@afopa.com.au) or 0414 773 918.

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**Why Palestine? Because it is a just cause, a noble ideal, a moral quest for equality and human rights. Edward Said**

The Australian Friends of Palestine Association

PO Box 437 Kensington Park SA 5068 [www.afopa.com.au](http://www.afopa.com.au) [secretary@afopa.com.au](mailto:secretary@afopa.com.au) 0414 773 918