

Northwestern Divest | Resolution

Northwestern Divestment Resolution UPDATE 2/19/2015 RESOLUTION PASSES IN SENATE 24-22-3!

WHEREAS, The Northwestern University Investment Office manages approximately \$7.9 billion of University assets [\[1\]](#), significantly contributed to by student tuition and fees, which totaled \$546.3 million in 2014; [\[2\]](#)

WHEREAS, Northwestern students have no access to information on what corporations the University is invested in [\[3\]](#), and should have input regarding what corporations their tuition money supports;

WHEREAS, the duties of the Subcommittee on Proxies, a smaller group within the Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees, include providing oversight of the University's investment policy with regards to "social issues;" [\[4\]](#)

WHEREAS, Northwestern University has committed to "engage locally, nationally, and internationally to heighten our global impact for the greater good;" [\[5\]](#)

WHEREAS, The Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, who control investment through the Investment Committee, include "the preservation of institutional integrity" and "the advancement of the university;" [\[6\]](#)

WHEREAS, Investment in corporations profiting from internationally recognized human rights abuses does not impact the global community "for the greater good," nor does it preserve Northwestern's "institutional integrity" or "advance... the university;"

WHEREAS, Northwestern lags behind other institutions on socially responsible investment [\[7\]](#), which is both a moral responsibility and a financially legitimate action,

WHEREAS, the Occupied Palestinian Territories are controlled militarily by the Israeli government, and;

WHEREAS, Israeli government violations of human rights and international law have been recognized and condemned by the international community including by the UN General Assembly in dozens of resolutions (i.e., 259, 316, 446, 452, 465, 468-469, 471, 476, 592, 605, 607, 608, 636, 641, 672, 673, 681, 694, 726, 799, etc.); by the UN Security Council; by the International Court of Justice's 2004 Advisory Opinion on the Route of the Separation Barrier in the West Bank [\[8\]](#); and by the Human Rights Council Fact-Finding Mission to Gaza, among others; [\[9\]](#)

WHEREAS, in 2005, Palestinian Civil Society issued the call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions, asking the international community to Divest from corporations profiting from their oppression; [\[10\]](#)

WHEREAS, this is in response to the call for BDS,

WHEREAS, passage of this resolution constitutes a response to the divestment component of the call;

WHEREAS, numerous companies are actively engaged in human rights violations of Palestinians;

WHEREAS, Divestment is the removing of investment from corporations that profit from human rights abuses and violations of international law;

WHEREAS, “In October 2005 Northwestern instructed the firms that invest money on behalf of Northwestern to sell any holdings those firms had in four foreign owned companies that had been identified as supporting the government regime in Sudan;” [\[11\]](#)

WHEREAS, there have been numerous student-led divestment initiatives targeting corporations involved in human rights abuses and other transgressions including an anti-Apartheid movement and DivestNU;

- There is precedent for ASG passing divestment resolutions: for example from South African Apartheid [\[12\]](#) and the coal industry [\[13\]](#),
- The student governments of UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC Santa Cruz, UC Irvine, UC San Diego, UC Riverside, Oberlin College, and Hampshire College, have all passed divestment resolutions, DePaul University passed a student referendum, and numerous campaigns are ongoing on other campuses;

WHEREAS, Divestment was a successful tactic that contributed to ending apartheid in South Africa [\[14\]](#);

WHEREAS, the role of student activists in exposing South Africa’s apartheid system and supporting equality, freedom, and dignity sets an example for us to follow as students of global conscience; and;

WHEREAS, as the example of the anti-Apartheid divestment movement shows, it is imperative for students to stand unequivocally against all forms of racism and bigotry globally and on campus, including but not limited to Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and the anti-Palestinian discrimination practiced under Israel’s system of illegal occupation in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem;

WHEREAS: Northwestern University partially divested from companies doing business in apartheid South Africa in 1985 in response to student pressure. [\[15\]](#) It is imperative that the University continues this legacy of socially responsible investment and should be held to an even higher standard 30 years later;

WHEREAS, the following illustrative and non-exhaustive list of companies, in which Northwestern may invest and profit from, that enable human rights abuses and violence;

WHEREAS, Caterpillar, Elbit Systems, Hewlett-Packard, G4S, Boeing, and Lockheed Martin, have violated the universal right “to life, liberty, and security of person;” “to education;” to “privacy, family [and] home;” “to own property, and ...[not to] be arbitrarily deprived of property”;

WHEREAS, Caterpillar has violated these rights by continually providing engineering tools and

bulldozers routinely used in the demolition of Palestinian homes, refugee camps, water cisterns, and agricultural fields in the West Bank and Gaza, and by providing bulldozers used to expand illegal settlements throughout the West Bank; [\[16\]](#)[\[17\]](#)

WHEREAS, Elbit Systems “remains one of two main providers of the electronic detection fence to the Apartheid Wall project in the West Bank. The company’s products are heavily relied upon by the Israeli Army in almost

every military operation launched at the Gaza Strip;” [\[18\]](#)

WHEREAS, Elbit Systems provides security and surveillance equipment for the US-Mexico border, profiting off of the militarization of the borderlands; [\[19\]](#)

WHEREAS, Hewlett-Packard Company (HP) has provided biometric identification systems used at Israeli military checkpoints, which restrict the freedom of movement of Palestinians, facilitate discrimination against Palestinians, and reinforce a stratification of citizenship; [\[20\]](#)

WHEREAS, HP profits from global mass incarceration and provides prisoner data systems for the United States Department of Homeland Security’s Immigration and Customs (ICE) Law Enforcement Support Center; [\[21\]](#)

WHEREAS, G4S provides security systems for prisons holding Palestinian political prisoners, as well as security systems for interrogation and detentions centers, where Palestinians are regularly subjected to torture; [\[22\]](#)

WHEREAS, G4S profits from the growth of private prisons and mass incarceration all over the world, as well as facilitating the detention and deportation of undocumented immigrants; [\[23\]](#)[\[24\]](#)

WHEREAS, Boeing, the second largest arms supplier worldwide, provides Israel with F-15A Fighter jets and Apache AH 64 helicopters which were used in the assault on Gaza this summer; [\[25\]](#)

WHEREAS, Lockheed Martin, the worlds largest arms manufacturer, supplies Israel with F-16 fighter jets, Longbow Hellfire Missiles, and AH -64 Apache helicopter parts, which were the main weapons used in the assault on Gaza; [\[26\]](#)

WHEREAS, Boeing and Lockheed Martin, as the worlds two largest arms manufacturers, profit from war and increased militarization all over the world; [\[27\]](#)

WHEREAS, having documented serious violations of human rights and possible war crimes, both Amnesty International [\[28\]](#) and Human Rights Watch [\[29\]](#) called upon the United States government and other parties to cease the transfer or sale of arms that would likely be used in the further commission of human rights violations;

WHEREAS, due to Northwestern University’s lack of transparency in the specificity of its holdings, there is not definitive confirmation that the University is invested in the six targeted corporations, however, there is no published socially responsible investment policy that would prevent the University from being invested in any of the corporations at any given time;

WHEREAS, investment in these companies shows implicit support for the decisions and actions of these companies, as well as their consequences, which include the killings of civilians, and violations of their basic human rights;

WHEREAS, the aforementioned companies have a financial stake in the continuation of these human rights abuses;

WHEREAS, the consequences of these companies’ actions also affect the Northwestern community directly, including students whose families experience occupation, systematic discrimination, death, injury, and other

forms of human rights violations;

WHEREAS, the only way to achieve financial neutrality in such situations is to end our investment in and implicit support for such companies through divestment;

WHEREAS, this resolution aims neither to condemn a country, a people, or a community nor to determine a political solution, but is solely aimed at ending our University's support of companies that profit from human rights violations;

LET IT BE RESOLVED, that ASG requests that the Northwestern University Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees, its Subcommittee on Proxies, and any other responsible bodies authorized to make investment decisions divest fully from companies profiting from human rights abuses and violations of international law in Palestine including but not limited to Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, G4S, Lockheed Martin, Elbit Systems, and Boeing, within the bounds of their fiduciary responsibility, until the aforementioned companies cease to enable the human rights violations identified in this resolution.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that ASG requests that the Northwestern University Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees, its Subcommittee on Proxies, and any other bodies authorized to make investment decisions refrain from making further investments in companies profiting from human rights abuses in Palestine.

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that ASG shall work to achieve greater transparency in university investments by forming an investment transparency task force.

SPONSORED BY:

Northwestern Students for Justice in Palestine

MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Atzlan) de Northwestern

Muslim Cultural Students Association

NUCHR (NU Community for Human Rights)

Alianza

Fight for Freedom

Model Arab League

Arab Students Organization

Al-Bayan Magazine

Pulse Magazine

Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship

Peace Project

Northwestern APAC (Asian Pacific American Coalition)

FMO (For Members Only)

PARS (Persian American Representatives of Students)

NUSAF (Northwestern University Singaporeans and Friends)

Medlife

NAISA (Native American and Indigenous Student Alliance)

[15] Report of the Special Trustee Committee on South Africa, Northwestern Observer, Vol 1 No 6, November 21, 1985 (available from the University Archives)