

New Orleans City Council Votes to Stand with Palestinian Rights

NEW ORLEANS-- Following a year of protests and community pressure, the City Council voted unanimously today to enshrine International Human Rights in the City of New Orleans. Last month, New Orleans Palestinian Solidarity Committee (NOPSC) demanded that the City Council pass a [resolution](#) that calls on the city to cease doing business with companies that profit from human rights abuses and violate international law. Today, Mayor-elect Latoya Cantrell introduced such a resolution R-18-5 and it passed.

New Orleans' Palestinian community celebrated the Council's decision. "As a Palestinian and a student in New Orleans," says Loyola undergraduate Marco Saah, I don't want to see the city I live in contracting with companies that profit off of the suffering and occupation of my homeland. Today's vote by the City Council is a first step towards ending the City of New Orleans' complicity with human rights violations and holding corporations accountable for supporting Israel's illegal occupation."

Companies such as Caterpillar and Hewlett-Packard Enterprise (HPE) operate in New Orleans and are frequent targets of grassroots social justice campaigns. Caterpillar uses its bulldozers to [destroy Palestinian homes](#) and farmland, and [HPE's technology is used](#) in Israel's military and police and prison system and in the administration of Israel's discriminatory population registry. With this vote, the New Orleans City Council [joins a number](#) of US cities, church groups, and academic associations in supporting Palestinian rights.

NOPSC petitioned the city council to take action as part of the global [BDS \(Boycott Divestment and Sanctions Movement\)](#) for Palestinian freedom. Decades ago, New Orleans Mayor Ernest Morial spearheaded similar measures in New Orleans as part of the world wide effort to bring down the Apartheid government of South Africa. Today, explains organizer, Tabitha Mustafa, the City Council took similar steps: "New Orleans is a city that has a tragic history with human rights. Whether in Honduras or Palestine or Vietnam, companies that profit from the misery of New Orleanians and our families abroad should not do business with the City of New Orleans."

Local Palestinian Jannah Atallah agrees: "There are so many Palestinians here in NOLA, and we are your neighbors, your friends and family, and this affects us. As a Palestinian from New Orleans, I'm asking my city to not turn a blind eye to what's happening and to stand with us to fight for freedom and for human rights."

[Click Here](#) for the resolution text, or see below.

RESOLUTION

NO. R-18-5

CITY HALL: January 11, 2018

BY: COUNCILMEMBERS CANTRELL, BROSSETT, GRAY, HEAD AND WILLIAMS

WHEREAS, the City of New Orleans (hereinafter the "City") was declared to be a Welcoming City on October 1, 2015, to create a more inclusive, receptive city environment for all local populations; and

WHEREAS, the City commits itself to protect, respect, and fulfill the full range of inherent human rights for all, as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and numerous other international human rights instruments; and

WHEREAS, the City enshrined these values in Ord. No. 19278 M.C.S.; 25700 M.C.S.; Code of Ord. Sec. 86-4. (Safeguard all individuals within the city from discrimination because of race, creed, national origin or ancestry, color, religion, gender or sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, marital status, age, physical condition or disability in connection with employment, housing, public accommodations, financial practices, and credit transactions; to protect their interest in personal dignity and freedom from humiliation; to make available to the city their full productive capacities in employment; to secure the city against domestic strife and unrest which would menace its democratic institutions; to preserve the public safety, health, and general welfare; and to further the interest, rights, and privileges within the city); and

WHEREAS, the City has pledged to meet its commitments to rewarding workplace diversity, promoting local industry, protecting the environment, and promoting equity through compliance with civil rights; and

WHEREAS, consistent with its responsibilities to its residents, the City of New Orleans, has social and ethical obligations to take steps to avoid contracting with or investing in corporations whose practices consistently violate human rights, civil rights or labor rights, or corporations whose practices egregiously contradict efforts to create a prosperous, educated, healthy and equitable society; **NOW, THEREFORE**

BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council encourages the creation of a process to review direct investments and contracts for inclusion on, or removal from, the City's list of corporate securities and contractual partners, according to the values of the City as referenced in this Resolution.