

While Israeli academics have grown used to such news from Great Britain, where anti-Israel groups several times attempted to establish academic boycotts, the formation of the United States movement marks the first time that a national academic boycott movement has come out of America. Israeli professors are not sure yet how big of an impact the one-week-old movement will have, but started discussing the significance of and possible counteractions against the campaign.

"As educators of conscience, we have been unable to stand by and watch in silence Israel's indiscriminate assault on the Gaza Strip and its educational institutions," the U.S. Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel stated in its inaugural press release last Thursday. Speaking in its mission statement of the "censorship and silencing of the Palestine question in U.S. universities, as well as U.S. society at large," the group follows the usual pattern of such boycotts, calling for "non-violent punitive measures" against Israel, such as the implementation of divestment initiatives, "similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era."

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