

**Email Regarding Pro-BDS Event Sent by Director of University of Michigan's Center for  
Middle Eastern and North African Studies to Center's Faculty and Students**

From: **Samer Mahdy Ali** <[samerali@umich.edu](mailto:samerali@umich.edu)>

Date: Tue, Oct 23, 2018 at 5:34 PM

Subject: Mon. Oct 29th -- CMENAS Teach-In Town Hall: What is BDS? And Why Does it Matter?

To: CMENAS Faculty <[ii.cmenas.faculty@umich.edu](mailto:ii.cmenas.faculty@umich.edu)>, CMENAS Grad Students

<[ii.cmenas.grad@umich.edu](mailto:ii.cmenas.grad@umich.edu)>, CMENAS MA Students <[ii.cmenas.mastudents@umich.edu](mailto:ii.cmenas.mastudents@umich.edu)>

Cc: Jessica Hill Riggs <[jessmhill@umich.edu](mailto:jessmhill@umich.edu)>

Dear CMENAS Community,

I wanted to let you know about the following event scheduled on Oct. 29th, from 9 to 11am, addressing a major question of this moment in history. CMENAS organized this event on short order in response to the current crisis and in partnership with the Institute for the Humanities, Department of Anthropology, Arab and Muslim American Studies, Department of American Culture, the International Institute, Conflict and Peace Initiative, Middle Eastern Law Students Association (MELSA), and the College of LSA.

Let me say a word about the structure of the event: The "Teach In" portion of the event (45 minutes) is decidedly pro-BDS, but this is not an "equal time" type situation. We live in a time when 25 states in the US have passed anti-BDS legislation, and UM leadership has taken a side against BDS, and for many, chilling academic freedom. In this context, a pro-BDS panel goes against the grain of official orthodoxy and claims for our community a forum to interrogate and test this unpopular point of view. The "Town Hall" portion of the event (1.25 hours) will involve an open discussion with and among audience members where diverse and diverging views can be aired in a deliberate manner.

Controversial issues, such as BDS, stimulate debate and we have planned for a lively and thoroughgoing discussion of timely questions with the support of II leadership and staff.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

warm regards,

Samer Ali

-- Please help us distribute widely for publicity --

CMENAS Teach-In Town Hall

**What is BDS? And Why Does it Matter?**

October 29, 2018

9-11am

Great Lakes Room, Palmer Commons

[100 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48109](#)

Lorde cancelled her show in Israel in protest. So did the Pixies, Elvis Costello, Roger Waters, and Santana. More than one 100 artists and musicians have joined the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement in solidarity with Palestinian and Israeli nonviolent activists. What motivates them? Since 2014, twenty-five U.S. states have passed anti-BDS legislation, citing anti-Semitism. In recent days though, federal courts in Kansas and Arizona have ruled that such laws violate First Amendment rights to freedom of expression. What is fair and just, in light of our diverse histories: members of the UM community recall boycotts of Jewish businesses in Nazi Europe, America's history of civil rights boycotts, and boycotts in response to Palestinian displacement under Israeli Occupation?

The CMENAS Teach-in Town Hall will explore this vital moment in world history with experts and take stock of BDS, now active for thirteen years. Meet Anna Baltzer of the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, and Huwaida Arraf, civil rights attorney and co-founder of the International Solidarity Movement, and UM alumna.

Everyone is Welcome!

**Funding:** CMENAS Endowments, Institute for the Humanities, Department of Anthropology, Arab and Muslim American Studies, Department of American Culture, the International Institute, Conflict and Peace Initiative, Middle Eastern Law Students Association (MELSA), and the College of LSA