

Resolution 2016-4S-302

Divestment from Corporations Complicit in Human Rights Violations and Fiduciary Responsibility at UIC

**The Undergraduate Student Government
Legislative Body
Date: February 8, 2016**

Sponsors:

1. Interpersonal Relations Committee Director Asha Binbek
2. General Assembly Member Ahmad Albanna

WHEREAS, The University of Illinois at Chicago has been historically founded and is committed to principles of social justice, human rights and equality, and;

WHEREAS, The University of Illinois at Chicago strives to uphold the values of justice, equality, and humanity fought for by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, and;

WHEREAS, part of the University of Illinois at Chicago's mission is to to create knowledge that transforms our views of the world and, through sharing and application, transforms the world and to foster scholarship and practices that reflect and respond to the increasing diversity of the U.S. in a rapidly globalizing world, and;

WHEREAS, The University of Illinois at Chicago may invest some of its \$2.27 billion endowment in corporations complicit in human rights violations, and;

WHEREAS, the Occupied Palestinian Territories are controlled militarily by the Israeli government and government violations of human rights and international law have been recognized and condemned by the international community including by the United Nations General Assembly, the UN Security Council, the International Court of Justice's 2004 Advisory Opinion on the Route of the Separation Barrier in the West Bank, the Human Rights Council Fact-Finding Mission to Gaza and others, and;

WHEREAS, United Kingdom has been cited by Human Rights Watch for human rights violations that were committed "with the knowledge, complicity and, in some cases, in the presence of UK intelligence

officers, including in Bangladesh, Egypt, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates,” and attempts of cover-ups were also reported, these violations include torture of prisoners and deportation of anyone who seemed to be a threat to national security; and,

WHEREAS, China has been charged with numerous human rights’ violations for restrictive labor rights, poor labor conditions for workers, detention of persons without trial, and censorship and harsh punishment for people who wrote news that "slandered the country's political system", "distorted the history of the Party", "publicized Falun Gong and other evil cults", and "incited ethnic splittism" and;

WHEREAS, United States has been cited for human rights’ violations on twenty-five counts including drone attacks in foreign countries that have killed between 2,700 and 5,000 people, torturing prisoners and keeping them indefinitely in Guantanamo Bay, and NSA's mass surveillance "both within and outside the United States through the bulk phone metadata program (Section 215 of the PATRIOT Act) and, in particular, the surveillance under Section 702 of Amendments to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) conducted through PRISM (collection of the contents of communications from US-based companies) and UPSTREAM (tapping of fiber-optic cables in the country that carry internet traffic) programs and their adverse impact on the right to privacy."

WHEREAS, divestment is the removal of investments from corporations that profit off of human rights abuses, worker’s rights abuses, child labor, and war crimes which violate international law, and;

WHEREAS, there have been numerous student-led divestment initiatives targeting corporations involved in human rights violations, and;

WHEREAS, there is a standard we must uphold as the representative body of our undergraduate students, and;

WHEREAS, University of Illinois at Chicago Undergraduate Student Government would join several other universities in the United States that have called for divestment including but not limited to: the student governments of University of California Berkeley, University California Los Angeles, University of California Santa Cruz, University of California Irvine, University of California San Diego, University of California Riverside, Oberlin College, Hampshire College, Northwestern University, DePaul University, Loyola University, Stanford University, University of South Florida, Princeton University, University of Toledo, Earlham College, Oglethorpe University, and several other universities, and;

WHEREAS, University of Illinois at Chicago successfully partially divested in 1987 that contributed to ending apartheid in South Africa, and;

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, domestically, and on campus, and;

WHEREAS: The University of Illinois at Chicago partially divested from companies doing business in apartheid South Africa in 1987 in response to student pressure. It is imperative that the University continues this legacy of socially responsible investments and should be held to an even higher standard 29 years later, and;

WHEREAS, there are numerous companies actively engaged in human rights violations in Palestine, Syria, China, United States, US-Mexican border, and Chicago; and,

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

WHEREAS, G4S, Hewlett-Packard, Caterpillar, Lockheed Martin, Elbit Systems, Boeing, and Foxconn, and 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, and;

WHEREAS, G4S profits from the growth of private prisons and mass incarceration all over the world, has violated human rights in South African prisons where detainees are often subjected to torture with electroshock and forced injections, G4S is also complicit in immigrant-detainee labor, forcing immigrant detainees to work for as little as \$1 per hour in the United Kingdom; and,

WHEREAS, Foxconn has some 1.2 million employees in China and even more worldwide including in Australia, Brazil, India, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, and Malaysia, and has been violating labor rights with atrocious working and living conditions, and poor working and overtime wages, Foxconn is not compliant in Chinese child labor laws employing children under the age of 16 years old; and,

WHEREAS, Hewlett-Packard profits from global mass incarceration by providing prisoner data systems for the United States Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs (ICE) Law Enforcement Support Center, and;

WHEREAS, Caterpillar has violated human 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, and;

WHEREAS, Lockheed Martin, the worlds largest arms manufacturer, supplies the United States with F-16 fighter jets, Longbow Hellfire Missiles, and AH-64 Apache helicopter parts, which are the main weapons used in the assault on Syria, and;

WHEREAS, Elbit Systems provides security and surveillance equipment for the US-Mexico border, profiting off of the militarization of the borderlands, and;

WHEREAS, Boeing and Lockheed Martin, as the worlds two largest arms manufacturers, profit from war and increased militarization all over the world, and;

WHEREAS, having documented serious violations of human rights and possible war crimes, both Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch, 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, and;

WHEREAS, University of Illinois at Chicago students do not have adequate information regarding the university's investments, and should have input on where their university's dollars are being spent, and;

WHEREAS, the corporations the university chooses to support affect our university as a whole, and;

WHEREAS, investing in corporations that support the violation of humans rights and international laws, we, in turn, are also supporting the violation of human rights and international laws, and;

WHEREAS, these actions represent our university and our community directly including students of families who have faced anguish from these human rights violations, and;

WHEREAS, since there is not adequate information available to students about the university's investments, there is no way of knowing if the university has actually invested in these companies; however, there are not any records or policies that would prevent the university from investing in these corporations now or in the future, and;

WHEREAS, the aforementioned companies and many others play a large role in these human rights violations, and;

WHEREAS, the only way to ensure the university's fiscal neutrality is to stop investing in companies supporting and profiting from human rights violations through divestment, and;

WHEREAS, this resolution does not aim to condemn a country, a people, or a community or to determine a political solution, but is solely aimed at ending our university's support of companies that profit from human rights violations, then;

LET IT BE RESOLVED, a copy of this resolution shall be sent to the University of Illinois at Chicago Faculty Senate, which shall be asked to consider and support this resolution, and;

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University of Illinois at Chicago Undergraduate Student Government requests that the University of Illinois at Chicago Finance and Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees, and any other responsible bodies authorized to make investment decisions divest

fully from companies profiting from human rights abuses and violations of international law including in but not limited to Palestine, Syria, China, United Kingdom, US-Mexico border, and Chicago, including but not limited to Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, G4S, Lockheed Martin, Foxconn, Elbit Systems, and Boeing, in accordance to their fiduciary responsibility, until said companies cease to enable the human rights violations identified in this resolution, and;

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University of Illinois at Chicago Undergraduate Student Government requests that the University of Illinois at Chicago Finance and Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees, and any other bodies authorized to make investment decisions refrain from making further investments in companies profiting from human rights violations; and,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Undergraduate Student Government requests that the University of Illinois at Chicago Finance and Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees work to achieve greater transparency in the University of Illinois at Chicago's investments, by establishing a committee that will:

1. Investigate all investments, current and prospective, for ties with corporations complicit with human rights violations based on United Nations definitions
 - a. If any corporations are found to be complicit, the Finance and Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees should fully divest
2. Publish a list in their annual report listing companies the University has invested in
3. Hold at least one student position on the committee to ensure administration-to-student transparency

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University of Illinois at Chicago Undergraduate Student Government requests information on University of Illinois at Chicago's investments be made public to ensure transparency between students and administration and their financial dealings with university funds.

President,
Mercedes Jones

Speaker of the Assembly,
Gabriela Bedolla

Sponsored by:

1. Students for Justice in Palestine
2. Jewish Voice for Peace Chicago
3. Students for the Advancement of Freedom, Equality & Human Rights
4. United Students Against Sweatshops
5. Black Student Union
6. Fearless Undocumented Alliance
7. Mexican Students de Aztlan

8. Pakistani Student Organization
9. Union for Puerto Rican Students
10. Political Science Student Union
11. Hindu Student Council
12. United Muslim Relief
13. Amnesty International
14. Muslim Student Association
15. Palestine Children's Relief Fund
16. Powerlifting and Body Building
17. MEDLife
18. Thaakat
19. Arab American Association of Engineers and Architects
20. Delta Epsilon Mu-Psi Fraternity
21. Delta Xi Phi Sorority
22. Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement
23. Quality Rights Chicago
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