

Frequently Asked Questions

What was the outcome of the 2023 All-Member Referendum?

Voting took place by electronic ballot between June 15 and July 14. Thirty-seven percent of AAA's eligible members voted, with 2,016 members (71% of the votes) supporting the resolution, and 835 members (29% of the votes) voting to oppose it.

What procedures governed the introduction of this resolution?

The resolution was in compliance with AAA bylaws (Article VII, Section 1), which specify that a petition signed by 50 Members in good standing can request that the Board conduct an all-member referendum. A majority of votes cast in the referendum constitutes a favorable vote. The Board reviewed this request and decided to put the resolution to a vote of the membership.

What institutions will enacting the resolution affect directly?

AAA's academic institutional boycott is limited to AAA—as an association—refraining from formal collaborations with Israeli institutions of higher education. The resolution pertains only to those institutions, and not to individual scholars and students affiliated with these institutions. The Association remains steadfastly committed to the protection of academic freedom and the dissemination of anthropological knowledge. AAA's academic institutional boycott is limited to AAA—as an association—refraining from formal collaborations with Israeli academic institutions.

What does the resolution call upon the Association to do?

The Executive Board has approved the following set of actions aligned with the Association's core values and mission, barring Israeli institutions of higher education from:

- being listed in AAA's published materials, including AAA's AnthroGuide to Departments
- advertising in AAA publications, websites, and other communications channels, including the AAA Career Center
- using AAA conference facilities for job interviews
- participating in the AAA Graduate School Fair
- participating in the AAA Departmental Services Program
- participating in joint conferences or events with AAA and its sections, and
- where within AAA's control, republishing and reprinting articles from AAA publications in journals and publications owned by Israeli institutions.

What is beyond the scope of the resolution?

The AAA academic institutional boycott does NOT prevent:

- individuals affiliated with Israeli academic institutions from registering for and attending AAA conferences, even if their institutions have paid for their expenses
- articles published in AAA journals from being reprinted or republished in journals not owned by Israeli institutions that are edited by individuals affiliated with Israeli academic institutions
- individuals affiliated with Israeli academic institutions from serving as journal editors or Section / AAA elected officials, even if their institutions have paid for related expenses (their institution would be identified as being subject to an institutional boycott)
- individuals affiliated with Israeli academic institutions from publishing in AAA journals, even if their institutions have paid for their expenses, and
- Israeli university libraries from subscribing to AAA journals, including AnthroSource.

What are the grounds for lifting the boycott?

The resolution authorizes the Executive Board to come up with an implementation plan, which includes specifying the process by which the Board will consider lifting the boycott. AAA will lift the institutional boycott when it is established by a consensus of a group of experts the Board has commissioned for this purpose that Israeli academic institutions have substantially ended their complicity in violating Palestinian rights as stipulated in international law. The Executive Board will monitor and evaluate the situation at least every five years, or more frequently as deemed appropriate, and determine whether the boycott should remain in place.

Have other US-based scholarly and professional societies voted on a boycott of Israeli academic institutions?

The American Studies Association, the National Women's Studies Association, the Asian American Studies Association, the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, the Critical Ethnic Studies Association, and the Middle East Studies Association have each passed resolutions endorsing the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) campaign in part or in full. The Modern Language Association and the American Anthropological Association voted not to endorse the BDS campaign in 2016. The American Historical Association rejected consideration of two BDS-related resolutions.

What is the precedent for the Association undertaking an academic boycott? What other boycotts have the Association engaged in over the course of its 120+ year history?

AAA has a history of annual meeting locations and companies subject to AAA boycotts and statements of censure / condemnation, but academic institutions have never been subject to a AAA boycott.

Annual Meeting Locations:

- Illinois (repealed) – in 1999, the AAA passed a resolution announcing that the Association would not hold scholarly meetings in the state of Illinois until such time that the University of Illinois replace its “Chief Illiniwek” mascot. In 2007, the board agreed that in recognition of the fact the University discontinued its use of the mascot, AAA would resume scheduling meetings in Illinois.
- Arizona (repealed) – in 2010, the Executive Board passed a resolution committing to avoid holding scholarly conferences in the state (but not on Indian reservations in the state) until such time as the state repealed Senate Bill 1080 or it was struck down as constitutionally invalid. By 2015 consent decree, the law was found to be unconstitutional, and the boycott was lifted.
- Georgia – also in 2010, the Executive Board passed a resolution committing to avoid holding scholarly conferences in the state until HB87 is either repealed or struck down as constitutionally invalid. Unlike the Arizona legislation, Georgia’s has never been taken off the books. However, in 2019, the Board determined that all resolutions should be reviewed at least every five years to determine whether they should remain in effect. Repealing this Georgia-related resolution is currently under consideration.

Locations subject to Association statements of censure or condemnation in an effort to see measurable changes instituted:

- 1994 – In support of Cuba. The AAA condemned the US Cuban embargo and asked the US Congress and then-President Clinton to adopt a consistent humanitarian policy of alleviating human suffering by ending its Cuban embargo and adopting a more human approach to resolving differences with Cuba by encouraging a freer exchange of ideas and persons, lifting all restrictions on travel between the two countries.
- 1995 – Colorado. The AAA called upon the citizens of Colorado to challenge and repeal State Constitutional Amendment #2, which sought to repeal anti-discrimination ordinances in several Colorado cities, and also called upon Colorado citizens to urge the state legislature to prohibit the passage of any such ordinances in the future.
- Peru – In June 2009, the AAA and Organizing Committee of the World Council of Anthropological Associations (WCAA) issued a statement to Peruvian President Alan Garcia expressing concern about the government’s violation of indigenous peoples’ human, territorial and legal rights. The statement also condemned the use of violence against peaceful protestors, as well as the executive decrees against which they were protesting.
- Honduras - In February 2010, AAA members voted to adopt a resolution urging US President Obama and members of the US Congress to acknowledge and condemn the

human rights violations that were committed by the de facto government in Honduras since the June 28, 2009 coup d'état; give support to progressive forces in Honduras striving to create a real democracy; work with allied countries to find a peaceful and democratic solution to the ongoing crisis in Honduras; and join other Latin American countries in withholding recognition of individuals selected in a subsequent election held November 29, 2009.

Companies subject to AAA boycott:

- Coca Cola – in February 2009, the AAA announced it supported the Colombian union SINALTRAINAL's call for a boycott of Coca-Cola Company and its products, and AAA called on its members to do the same until Coca-Cola agrees to bargain in good faith with its workers.

What has changed about Israeli government policies and practices towards Palestinian people since the last time AAA considered forms of engagement?

As the preamble to the 2023 resolution indicates, the Israeli government has continued to inflict harm on the Palestinian people and enact policies that consistently restrict the engagement of Palestinian universities with international scholars.

The AAA commissioned a Task Force to investigate the harms imposed on Palestinian people by the Israeli government's policies and practices and found in 2016 that these policies and practices place significant limitations on academic freedom and have led to substantial deprivations in the health and welfare of Palestinians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, as well as within Israel itself. Unfortunately, we have not seen significant changes for the better since the Task Force's findings were reported.

Credible observers such as the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and B'Tselem confirm that Israeli authorities continue to impose systematic racial oppression and discrimination on Palestinians.

As an individual, what can I do to have an effect on Israeli government policies and practices?

- Conduct research that generates credible evidence about the effectiveness of approaches to conflict resolution and the protection of human rights.
- Speak out on the principles and practices of justice and human rights – in your classrooms, on your campuses, in your writings.
- Share your views in op-eds and other forms of writing that increase general public awareness.
- Share your views with your state and national political representatives.

- Organize scholarly exchanges with people holding diverse perspectives on the uses of anthropological research to effect policy change.
- Review your own investment portfolios and retirement programs to assure that these investments reflect your decision about whether to invest in Israeli organizations or other organizations associated with substantial operations in Israel.
- Stay informed on the issues confronting Palestine and separate the rejection of Israeli practices from harm to individual persons.