March 20, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

Recently, a petition was submitted to the AAA Executive Board to put a referendum to boycott Israeli academic institutions to an electronic membership vote. Having met the requirement of 50 members of good standing signing the petition, as per Article VII of the AAA bylaws, the Board will put the referendum to a vote before all AAA members June 15 – July 14 (Note: this will not be part of the AAA elections held in April/May).

As many of you will recall, a request for the Association to endorse a similar resolution was put to the membership in 2016. AAA commissioned a Task Force in 2014 to investigate the issues embedded in the Israeli-Palestine political situation that are relevant to anthropology (and to the Association), which then issued a final report to the Executive Board in 2015. Following our bylaws, a 2015 Business Meeting vote on a similar boycott resolution presented the matter to the full membership, which was deeply divided on the issue and voted against a boycott in 2016. The Board instead instituted eight actions in support of Palestinian rights and resources on behalf of the Association.

We all know how important it is for our Association to live up to our longstanding commitments to preserving academic freedom and protecting human rights. The Association reaches decisions on how to fulfill these commitments through a time-honored, transparent, democratic process and procedure. We will continue to provide you with relevant information as the discussion moves forward. Throughout, we will maintain our proud tradition of engaging well-informed and respectful conversation.

It is extremely important that we have as many members as possible inform themselves on the issues at stake, the potential impacts on the Israel-Palestine conflict and on the Association, and take part in this referendum. I urge you to weigh in with your vote. Stay tuned for more information as we move forward with this issue.

Sincerely,

Ramona L. Pérez
President
American Anthropological Association