

Motion Regarding Divestment from Companies Profiting from the Illegal Occupation of the Palestinian Territories

Whereas, the SSMU Constitution states that “the SSMU commits to demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights [and] social justice,”¹ and the SSMU Equity Policy states that “the SSMU- an organization working with individuals, in groups, within organizations, and across a wide social and political context- shall promote a functional anti-oppressive environment”²;

Whereas, the Government of Canada’s official foreign policy states that “the Fourth Geneva Convention applies in the occupied territories and establishes Israel’s obligations as an occupying power...” and that as per “UN Security Council Resolutions 446 and 465, Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention [which] also constitutes a serious obstacle to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace”³;

Whereas, McGill students have historically fought against investments in companies that demonstrate lack of accountability, ethicality, and respect for the rights and dignity of others⁴;

Whereas, the following illustrative and non-exhaustive list of companies in which McGill University invests⁵ enable and profit from human rights abuses and violence;

Whereas, Oshkosh, RE/MAX, Toyota and Mitsubishi profit from the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories, violating the universal right “to life, liberty, and security of per-

1 <http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/SSMU-Constitution-English-2013-11-15.pdf>, pg 1

2 <http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Equity-Policy-Book-2014-01-13.pdf>, pg. 65

3 http://www.international.gc.ca/name-anmo/peace_process-processus_paix/canadian_policy-politique_canadienne.aspx?lang=eng

4 <http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2015/02/divest-mcgill-celebrates-second-anniversary-petition-submission/>

son”, “to education”, “to privacy, family [and] home”, “to own property and... [not to] be arbitrarily deprived of property”⁶;

Whereas, Volvo “provides heavy machinery used for the demolition of Palestinian houses in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, construction of Israeli settlements and construction of the Separation Wall” and “provide[s] services to the Israel Prison Service, including buses for the transportation of prisoners”⁷;

Whereas, RE/MAX “offer[s] real estate for sale and for rental in all the major West Bank settlements” in violation of international law⁸;

Whereas, similar measures have been taken by other institutions including, but not limited to, United Methodist Church⁹, the Presbyterian Church (USA)¹⁰, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (Ontario), the Fédération Nationale des Enseignantes et des Enseignants du Québec¹¹, and student unions such

5 https://secureweb.mcgill.ca/investments/files/investments/2014_09_30_u.s._equity.pdf

6 <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

7 <http://www.whoprofits.org/company/volvo-group-ab-volvo>

8 <http://whoprofits.org/company/remax-israel-impact-property-developers>

9 <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2012/united-methodists-call-for-boycott-of-products-made-by-israeli-companies-operating-in-occupied-palestinian-territories-8999>

10 <http://www.timesofisrael.com/presbyterian-church-votes-in-favor-of-divesting-from-israel/>

as UC San Diego¹², Stanford University¹³, Northwestern University¹⁴, DePaul University¹⁵, York University¹⁶, Carleton University¹⁷, and Concordia University¹⁸;

Be it resolved, that the Vice-President (External Affairs), in concert with the McGill Students in Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights, campaign to mobilize the McGill population on the responsibility of the McGill endowment to divest and refrain from investing in companies that pose social injury by contributing to the continuation and profitability of the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories through:

- Meeting with faculty, staff, and alumni,
- Meeting with student associations,
- Holding actions and events around campus;

Be it resolved, that the President be mandated to support any recommendations from the Committee to Advise on Social Responsibility (CAMSR) to the Board of Governors,

11 <http://rabble.ca/news/2009/09/bds-movement-growing-labour-solidarity-palestine>

12 <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/nora-barrows-friedman/we-are-turning-point-uc-santa-cruz-passes-divestment>

13 <http://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Stanford-University-student-senate-passes-Israel-divestment-resolution-391403>

14 <http://www.haaretz.com/news/world/1.643256>

15 http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2014-05-25/news/chi-depaul-students-israel-divestment-20140525_1_depaul-president-depaul-university-divestment

16 <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/campus-notes/2013/03/york-federation-students-pass-divestment-resolution-against-isra>

that affect substantive change and are in accordance with the divestments from the companies profiting from the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories;;

Be it resolved, that the President not support any recommendation for McGill to engage in shareholder action with companies that profit from the illegal occupation of the Palestinian Territories unless the actions considered would result in the following outcomes:

- Withdrawal from activity in the occupied territories that are contributing to the enforcement of the occupation
- Withdrawal from activity that generates profits from settlements built in violation of international law;

Be it resolved, that the President lobby the Board of Governors on the issue of divesting from companies that profit from the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories by:

- Reading a statement in support of divesting from companies that profit from the illegal occupation of Palestinian Territories at all Board of Governors meetings,
- Inquire to the issue of the above mentioned at meetings of the Board of Governors,
- Advocate that the issue meets CAMSR's definition of social injury and recommend no less than the complete divestment of holdings;

Be it resolved, that the Executive Committee shall:

- Educate members of the society about its positions on divestment from companies that profit from the occupation and McGill's complicity in the violation of international law and universal human rights of the Palestinian population in the territories,
- Send a special message on the Society's listserv, at least once every semester, to update members on McGill's progress in divestment from companies that profit from the occupation, the SSMU's lobbying efforts on the subject, and/or related topics pertaining to all types of divestment efforts at North American universities,
- Use the Society's social media sites to promote this campaign as well as regular listservs and the External Affairs Committee.

17 <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/canadian-first-carleton-university-students-pass-israel-occupation-divestment>

18 <http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/concordia-undergrad-students-vote-in-favour-of-israel-boycott>

Be it resolved, that the SSMU Legislative Council charge all individuals or groups named herein to fulfill these mandates to the best of their ability for a period of 5 years from the date of the inauguration of this motion;

Motioned by petition