

Beat: Miscellaneous

## **LONDON MAYOR BORIS JOHNSON HAS SPARKED FURY AND HAD MIDDLE EAST TRIP CUT SHORT**

### **HE HAS SPENT THREE DAYS IN ISRAEL**

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**USPA NEWS** - Boris Johnson has sparked fury and had his Middle East trip cut short after he made an embarrassing gaffe over the Israel Palestine conflict. The MP, on a trade trip to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, said advocates of a ban were a 'bunch of corduroy-jacketed lefty academics'.

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Mr Johnson has spent three days in Israel, where he claims to be drumming up business interest in London. But he landed himself in hot water after criticising the Israeli boycott. While his opposition is in line with British Government policy, his choice of words and approach is said to have prompted the backlash. (Dailymail)

Advocates of a boycott, which has been in place by some organisations in recent years, claims it exerts pressure on the Israeli government, particularly in relation to the building of settlements in occupied Palestinian territories, which have been condemned by the UN....Speaking after a trade export event in Tel Aviv, he added: 'I cannot think of anything more foolish than to say you want to have any kind of sanctions or divestment or boycott against a country that, when all is said and done, is the only democracy in the region that is the only place, in my view, which has an open, pluralistic society. Why boycott Israel?...'This is a very small minority in our country who are calling for this.' (BBC)

The BDS movement was set up as a grassroots Palestinian initiative with widespread support in Palestinian society, although it also enjoys support from activists overseas. Johnson was disinvited by the Sharek Youth Forum, which posted a statement saying it had refused to host the mayor as he 'fails to acknowledge our very existence as Palestinians'....'In Johnson's own words, the "only democracy in the region " a pluralist, open society' is one that oppresses citizens, confiscates land, demolishes homes, detains children and violates international humanitarian and human rights law on a daily basis.' (The Guardian)

Boris Johnson said in the speech: 'If we look at the history of modern Israel there is no doubt that the comparison can be extended, and that there is something Churchillian about the country he helped to create. There is the audacity, the bravery, the willingness to take risks with feats of outrageous derring-do.' (The Guardian)

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