

March 2, 2017

Teresa Dickerson, Community Affairs Manager
Kroger Food Stores
800 Ridge Lake Blvd, Suite 100
Memphis, TN 38119

Dear Ms. Dickerson:

It has been brought to our attention that Memphis Voices for Palestine has initiated demonstrations outside of the Midtown Kroger, demanding that Kroger stop carrying Sabra hummus.

As the umbrella organization representing the Memphis Jewish community, we wanted to take this opportunity to correct the misinformation being promoted and to clarify the context of the wild allegations made by Memphis Voices for Palestine.

Demonstrators are handing out flyers at Kroger with rhetoric that is rooted in the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel. The BDS movement was founded in 2005 as an international economic and cultural boycott of Israel, and has been promoted with false charges that Israel engages in racism and apartheid. The BDS movement does not support a “two-state solution,” or the creation of two states living side-by-side in peace, which is the goal sought by many Israelis and Palestinians.

Memphis Voices for Palestine’s flyers suggest that Kroger should stop carrying Sabra products because Strauss Group, an Israel-based co-owner of Sabra Dipping Company, “profits off of the illegal and immoral occupation and exploitation of Palestinian land by making their products using pillaged resources in a factory on illegally occupied land.” There is no truth whatsoever to this claim. In reality, no Sabra factory exists anywhere in the state of Israel. Sabra is headquartered in White Plains, New York, and its products are manufactured exclusively in the United States.

Elements of the demonstrators’ claims are true— Strauss Group is an Israeli company, it is a part owner of Sabra Dipping Company, and it does provide funds to the Israeli army. However, those funds are specifically designated for soldier welfare, including care packages, cultural and recreational activities, and pocket money for soldiers from underprivileged backgrounds.

Boycotting Sabra products as part of a BDS campaign is not a helpful or effective way of promoting peace between Israelis and Palestinians, for several reasons:

- BDS is a hostile de-legitimization tactic that rests on a fundamental rejection of Israel's right to exist and to defend itself, without providing a constructive approach to promote peace.
- BDS does not promote direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, the only clear path to peace between the two groups.
- The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is complex. Holding Israel alone accountable for the conflict, as the BDS movement does, is inaccurate and unhelpful. The conflict over land and security can only be resolved at the negotiating table, and both sides will be required to make difficult decisions and concessions.
- The harsh rhetoric of BDS proponents ignores the broad support of the Israeli public for a two-state solution, and ongoing Israeli government efforts to promote negotiations and improve the situation on the ground for Palestinians. BDS efforts to de-legitimize, punish, or isolate Israel undermine Israelis' commitment to achieving a peaceful two-state solution.

Recognizing that BDS is a form of political warfare targeted at Israel, the Tennessee General Assembly passed a resolution in April 2015 strongly condemning the BDS movement as "one of the main vehicles for spreading anti-Semitism and advocating the elimination of the Jewish State". The resolution passed with strong bipartisan support, backed unanimously in the House of Representatives and with only a single vote of opposition in the Senate.

We hope this clarifies the issue. Please feel free to be in touch should you require further information.

We look forward to continuing to see Sabra products on the shelves of Kroger. We would welcome a response from you regarding this matter.

Thank you.

Scott Vogel
VP, Community Relations

Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein
Director, Community Impact

Gary Kaplan
Chair

Laura Linder
President/CEO