

Jonathan Greenblatt
CEO and National Director



March 14, 2022

Mr. Dan Chu
Acting Executive Director
The Sierra Club
2101 Webster St Suite 1300
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Chu:

We are writing regarding the Sierra Club's announcement that it has cancelled upcoming trips Israel due to pressure from activists who seek to shut down any form of engagement or interaction with Israel or Israelis.

The Sierra Club, in partnership with the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, has long provided opportunities to visit Israel in order to birdwatch, hike, explore geological and historical sites, delve into environmental and conservation issues. Experiencing Israel through its environment, geology, history and people does not negate, nor "greenwash" the pressing reality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Rather, such trips provide essential opportunities for first-hand enriching engagement into these complex issues.

The activists who have demanded that the Sierra Club (and others) end all engagement with Israel or Israelis promote the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign's policy of "anti-normalization," which forbids people-to-people exchanges or dialogue opportunities so as not to "normalize" Israel. They do not support constructive measures to build Israeli-Palestinian engagement, promote peace negotiations or a mutually negotiated two-state solution to the conflict. Rather, the activists and the BDS campaign present a biased and simplistic approach to the complex Israeli-Palestinian conflict, positioning this dispute over territorial and nationalist claims as the fault of only one party – Israel - while ignoring other actors and dynamics. They call for pressuring and isolating Israel in order to advocate for self-determination for Palestinians while denying to Jews that same right.

In canceling your long-standing trips to Israel, the Sierra Club is ending the opportunity for your members to experience the majesty and beauty of the 500 million birds that migrate each year, explore geological and archeological highlights, consider Israel's environmental record and delve into the on-the-ground realities of modern Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Instead, the Sierra Club is validating and emboldening a campaign that seeks to undermine and demonize Israel's legitimacy, while doing nothing to promote understanding, reconciliation and ultimately peace.

We urge you to reconsider the short-sighted and misguided decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Greenblatt', written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Greenblatt
CEO and National Director