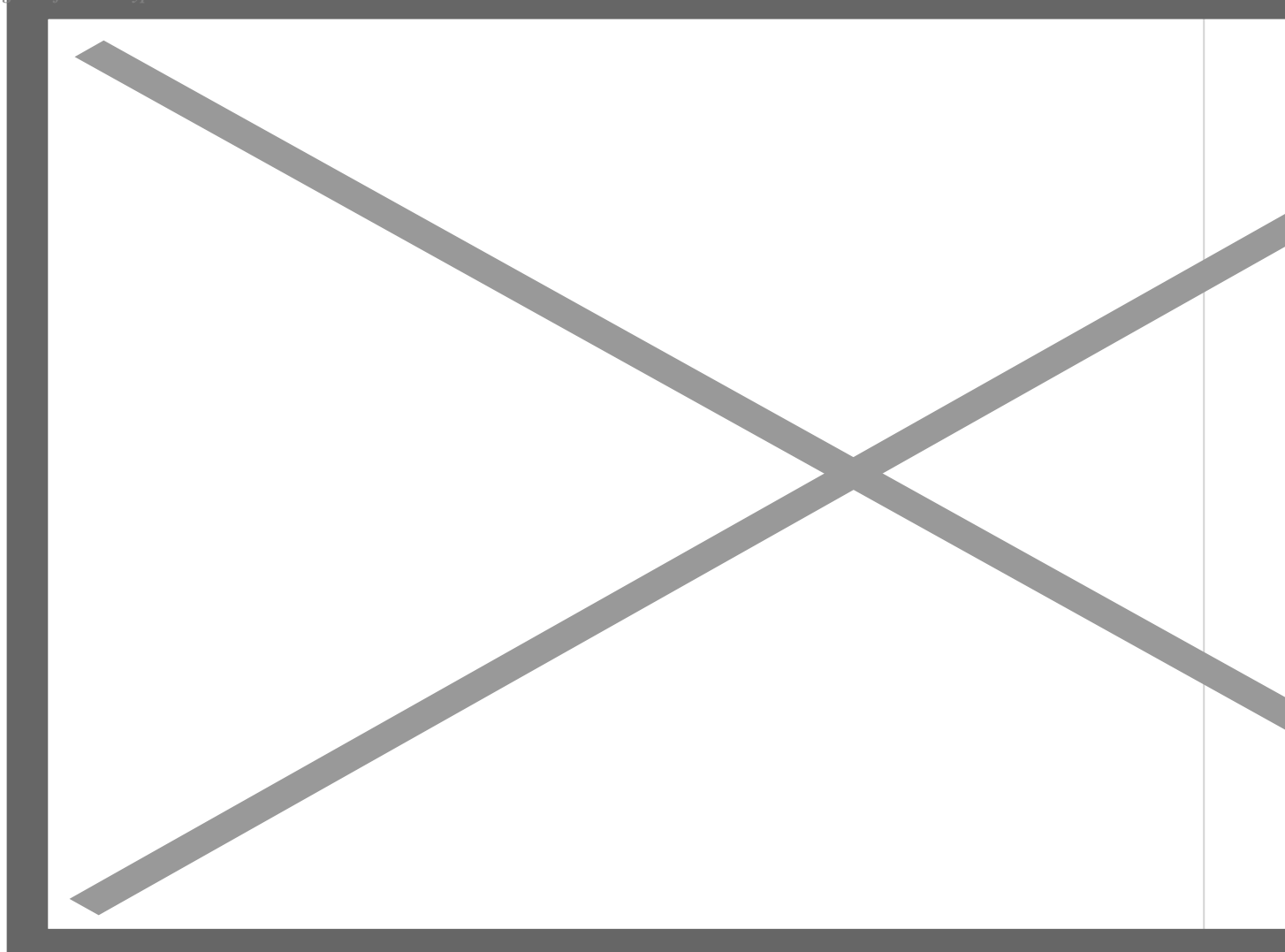


UK to outlaw boycotts against Israel amid wide-ranging bans on Russia

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The British government has announced plans to ban acts of boycott, effectively suppressing dissent on Israel, in the midst of London's wide-ranging application of boycotts and sanctions against Moscow over Russia's military campaign in Ukraine.

London, May 11 (RHC)-- The British government has announced plans to ban acts of boycott, effectively suppressing dissent on Israel, in the midst of London's wide-ranging application of boycotts and sanctions against Moscow over Russia's military campaign in Ukraine.

The announcement was made during the Queen's Tuesday speech, which Prince Charles delivered at the State Opening of Parliament on her behalf. He said the government will introduce "legislation [that] will prevent public bodies engaging in boycotts that undermine community cohesion."

The bill is widely believed to be a heavy blow to supporters of Palestinian rights in Britain and an attempt to silence the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which aims to pressure the Israeli regime to put an end to its occupation of Palestine as well as its atrocities against Palestinians.

It comes while the UK government and other Western powers have imposed several rounds of sanctions on Moscow and its allies over Russia's military campaign against Kiev.

In addition, Russia is now being subject to a number of boycotts as large businesses and organizations in the UK and several other countries are cutting ties with the country.

Meanwhile, pro-Palestinian groups in Britain denounced the proposed bill and said they would campaign against it.

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and Friends of Al Aqsa (FOA) described the bill as an attack on free speech. "In the case of Palestine, boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) is a peaceful movement calling on Israel to comply with international law and end its illegal occupation of Palestine," the FOA said in a statement.

"FOA remains committed to protecting the right of public bodies to make ethical choices through BDS," it added. Since 2005, the BDS movement has sought to sanction all Israeli-made products produced on illegally occupied Palestinian land.

The movement's success in causing economic damage to Israel has prompted pro-Israel groups to brand the BDS an "existential threat."

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