

الحملة الفلسطينية  
للمقاطعة الأكاديمية  
والثقافية لإسرائيل



Palestinian Campaign  
for the Academic & Cultural  
Boycott of Israel

## Vieux Farka Touré, do not Dishonor Malian Music and Cultural Heritage by Entertaining Israeli Apartheid

**The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) is deeply troubled to learn that you are scheduled to participate in the Red Sea Summer Jazz Festival to be held in Eilat between August 23rd and 26th, 2015. [1] We are writing to urge you not to associate your name with Israel's regime of oppression by cancelling your participation in this Jazz festival.**

You may not be aware of this, but for the Palestinians have been resisting Israel's settler colonialism and apartheid for over 65 years. This is not a conflict between Muslims and Christians fighting Jews on religious grounds, rather it is about an indigenous native population resisting colonizers. It is very much like the Malians resistance of French colonialism and the South African resistance of the Apartheid regime.

In 1948, the state of Israel was established by systematically dispossessing and ethnically cleansing more than 750,000 native Palestinian people in order to create an exclusivist Jewish state; Israel has denied Palestinian refugees, who today number more than 7 million people, their internationally recognized right to return to their homes. Israel also continues to expel native Palestinians from their homes in Jerusalem and the Naqab (Negev), and it maintains more than 50 racist laws that discriminate against its "non-Jewish" citizens, the indigenous Palestinian citizens of the state [2].

This past summer, Israel committed what some world leaders considered a massacre [3] against the besieged Palestinians in Gaza, killing more than 2,168 Palestinians, including over 500 children. [4] Israel's 51-day long assault annihilated entire families in their homes. [5] All what remains of these families are the official records documenting that they ever existed. A racist Israeli chant mocked the hundreds of Palestinian children murdered by Israel during its massacre in Gaza: "Tomorrow there's no school in Gaza, they don't have any children left." [6] Performing in Israel, would send all Palestinians the message that our lives do not matter and our human rights are not worthy of consideration.

In addition, Idan Raichel, who you are jointly performing with has publicly endorsed torture and explicitly describes his

role as an artist in terms of uncritical support for the Israeli military and government. He wrote in the Jerusalem Post in June 2014 that "In creating this musical project we feel as if we are cultural ambassadors for Israel." He added, "When I look back over the past few years, I see an Israel I am happy with." [7]

Why would you accept to perform in a country that is so deeply involved in war crimes and human rights violations? Performing in Israel at this time is morally equivalent to performing for the oppressors in South Africa during the apartheid era. We all remember how leading musicians played a

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**Archbishop Tutu**

prominent role in enforcing a cultural boycott of apartheid South Africa in the 1980's. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu and South African government minister Ronnie Kasrils have repeatedly declared, Israel has created a worse system of apartheid than anything that ever existed in South Africa. As Archbishop Tutu states, "if you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."

In 2004, inspired by the triumphant cultural boycott of apartheid South Africa, and supported by key Palestinian unions and cultural groups, PACBI issued a call for resistance in the form of the academic and cultural boycott of institutions involved in Israel's occupation and apartheid [8]. We wish, in our letter to you, to stress the importance of this Palestinian call, and underscore the rationale for the global boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel.

The 2004 Palestinian call appealed to international artists to refuse to perform in Israel or participate in events that serve to equate the occupier and the occupied [9] and thus contribute to the continuation of injustice. Following this, in 2005, an overwhelming majority in Palestinian civil society called for an all-encompassing **BDS campaign** based on the principles of human rights, justice, freedom and equality [10]. The BDS movement adopts a nonviolent, morally consistent strategy to

hold Israel accountable to the same human rights standards as other nations. It is asking artists to heed the boycott call until “Israel withdraws from all the lands occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem; removes all its colonies in those lands; agrees to United Nations resolutions relevant to the restitution of Palestinian refugees rights; and dismantles its system of apartheid.” [11]

Your performance in Israel would constitute a rejection of the appeal from over 170 civil society organizations that comprise the **Palestinian BDS movement**.

Today, the latest target of Israel’s racist colonial policies are the approximately 60,000 African migrants who have crossed into the country seeking shelter as refugees, often fleeing persecution in their home countries. Instead of offering them protection, Israel regards the African migrants as a threat to the “character of the Jewish identity of the state” [12]. Under its

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**Elvis Costello**

racist laws African asylum seekers can be imprisoned for up to a year and unlawfully offered a small monetary sum to leave the country [13]. Why would a talented artist like yourself lend your name to such a regime?

The struggles of the indigenous Palestinians and the African asylum seekers would be best served if you to stake a principled stance against Israel’s racist and colonial oppression by refusing to entertain Israeli apartheid. As Elvis Costello noted: “There are occasions when merely having your name added to

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a concert schedule may be interpreted as a political act that resonates more than anything that might be sung and it may be assumed that one has no mind for the suffering of the innocent.” [14]

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**PACBI and the broader BDS movement**, representing the absolute majority of Palestinian civil society, thus appeal to you to respect our struggle. We ask you to uphold our strategy of non-violent resistance and refrain from crossing a picket line called for by Palestinian society, endorsed by international organizations, and increasingly supported by progressive Israelis [15].

We urge you to heed our call by refusing to entertain Israeli apartheid.

Yours sincerely,

**PACBI**, Palestinian Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel – 13th June 2015

[1] [redseajazz.co.il/shows/toure-raichel\\_25portarena](http://redseajazz.co.il/shows/toure-raichel_25portarena)

[2] [adalah.org/eng/Israeli-Discriminatory-Law-Database](http://adalah.org/eng/Israeli-Discriminatory-Law-Database)

[3] Brazil’s president and France’s foreign minister condemned Israel’s attack on Gaza in 2014 as a “massacre.”

[4] [pchgaza.org/portal/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=10491:statistics-victims-of-the-israeli-offensive-on-gaza-since-08-july-2014&catid=145:in-focus](http://pchgaza.org/portal/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10491:statistics-victims-of-the-israeli-offensive-on-gaza-since-08-july-2014&catid=145:in-focus)

[5] [pchgaza.org/portal/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=10561:on-the-27th-day-of-the-israeli-offensive-rafah-under-israeli-fire-war-crimes-committed-against-palestinian-civilians-complete-families-annihilated&catid=36:pchrpressreleases&Itemid=194](http://pchgaza.org/portal/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10561:on-the-27th-day-of-the-israeli-offensive-rafah-under-israeli-fire-war-crimes-committed-against-palestinian-civilians-complete-families-annihilated&catid=36:pchrpressreleases&Itemid=194)

[6] [electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/gaza-graveyard-sing-joyful-israeli-youths](http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/gaza-graveyard-sing-joyful-israeli-youths)

[7] [adalahny.org/adalah-web-action/1202/open-letter-world-music-institute-do-not-present-idan-raichel](http://adalahny.org/adalah-web-action/1202/open-letter-world-music-institute-do-not-present-idan-raichel)

[8] [pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=869](http://pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=869)

[9] [pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1047](http://pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1047)

[10] [bdsmovement.net/?q=node/52](http://bdsmovement.net/?q=node/52)

[11] [www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=868](http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=868)

[12] [www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/19/-sp-african-migrants-speak-out-about-life-in-israel-detention-centres-holot](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/19/-sp-african-migrants-speak-out-about-life-in-israel-detention-centres-holot)

[13] Ibid

[14] [elviscostello.com/news/it-is-after-considerable-contemplation/44](http://elviscostello.com/news/it-is-after-considerable-contemplation/44)

[15] [boycottisrael.info](http://boycottisrael.info)