



Apartheid is not Fair Play... Boycott Adidas!

Palestinian civil society welcomes Arab boycott of Adidas and calls for a worldwide boycott due to company's complicity in Israel's occupation

Occupied Ramallah, 28 April 2012 -- Palestinian civil society warmly welcomes the declaration of the Arab Youth and Sports Council of Ministers in support of a boycott of Adidas due to its sponsorship of an Israeli marathon that violates international law and whitewashes Israel's illegal occupation of Jerusalem.[1] Particularly praiseworthy is the consequent decision by the Egypt Football Association to boycott Adidas despite the financial penalties it will incur as a result of doing so. [2] The BNC calls for an international boycott of Adidas until such time as it ends its involvement in the so-called "Jerusalem Marathon" as well as in any other Israeli events that serve to whitewash Israel's ethnic cleansing of the city and violations of international law.

The UN has consistently maintained that "any actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem are illegal and therefore null and void and have no validity whatsoever, and calls upon Israel to cease all such illegal and unilateral measures." [3] Adidas's partnership with the Israeli Jerusalem Municipality, the main organ of the occupying Power, on east or west of the city, clearly violates this resolution.

The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), the broadest coalition of Palestinian mass organisations, political parties, trade unions and networks, had revealed in 2011 [4] Adidas's complicity in Israel's so-called "Jerusalem Marathon," which illegally passes through occupied East Jerusalem and serves to strengthen Israel's grip on occupied Palestinian territory, calling on the company to withdraw its sponsorship of the sporting event. After failing to heed this call by Palestinian civil society and in light of the striking revival of popular boycotts of Israel in the Arab region as a result of the evolving popular revolutions in the region, Adidas has now become a target for boycott across the Arab world, which will undoubtedly lead to massive loss of revenue. The price of complicity in Israel's violations of international law has increased sharply, thanks to the Arab Spring and the spectacular spread of the BDS movement globally.

Another corporation that learned this lesson is Alstom, the French conglomerate that is implicated in the Israeli tram project connecting occupied Jerusalem with Israel's illegal colonies built on occupied Palestinian land. In November 2011, Alstom lost a \$9.4 billion contract in Saudi Arabia as a direct result of its complicity in Israel's occupation. [5]

The Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC) is a wide coalition of the largest Palestinian mass organizations, trade unions, networks and organizations.

Member organizations:

- Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine
- Gen. Union of Palestinian Workers
- Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions
- Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO)
- Palestinian Nat'l Institute for NGOs
- Federation of Indep. Trade Unions
- Global Palestine Right of Return Coalition
- Occupied Palestine and Syrian Golan Heights Initiative
- Gen. Union of Palestinian Women
- Union of Palestinian Farmers
- Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (STW)
- Nat'l Committee for Grassroots Resistance
- Pal. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)
- Nat'l Committee to Commemorate the Nakba
- Civic Coalition for the Defense of Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem
- Coalition for Jerusalem
- Union of Pal. Charitable Organizations
- Palestinian Economic Monitor
- Union of Youth Activity Centers-Palestine Refugee Camps
- Union of Professional Associations

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The Israeli Jerusalem Municipality, the organiser of the Jerusalem Marathon with which Adidas has made its partnership, has since its inception been the key perpetrator of systematic policies of ethnic cleansing, colonisation, and apartheid in Jerusalem. [6] The Jerusalem Marathon website itself openly refers to East Jerusalem as “mostly the home of former Jordanian citizens,” painting Palestinians as foreigners instead of the indigenous people of the land. [7]

John Dugard, the prominent international law professor widely regarded as the father of human rights law in South Africa and the former UN special rapporteur for human rights in the occupied territories, has repeatedly accused Israel of subjugating Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory, especially in East Jerusalem, to apartheid policies. He said [8]:

"The similarities between the situation of East Jerusalemites and black South Africans [are] very great in respect of their residency rights. We had the old Group Areas Act in South Africa. East Jerusalem has territorial classification that has the same sort of consequences as race classification had in South Africa in respect of who you can marry, where you can live, where you can go to school or hospital."

A recent report by European Union Heads of Mission in Jerusalem details Israel's illegal policies in the city noting:

“Israel is actively perpetuating its annexation [of Jerusalem] by systematically undermining the Palestinian presence in the city through the continued expansion of settlements, restrictive zoning and planning, ongoing demolitions and evictions, [and] an inequitable education policy....” [9]

UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, Raquel Rolnik, went as far as accusing Israel of implementing a “strategy of Judaisation” in Jerusalem -- and elsewhere -- saying:

“From the Galilee and the Negev to east Jerusalem and the West Bank, the Israeli authorities promote a territorial development model that excludes, discriminates against and displaces minorities, particularly affecting Palestinian communities, side by side with the accelerated development of predominantly Jewish settlements.” [10]

The Israeli marathon is part of an ongoing process to re-brand [11] Israel and institutionalize its illegal hold on the entirety of the occupied city. “I am proud that Israel's capital is part of the marathons held throughout the world,” boasted a letter from Jerusalem's mayor, Nir Barkat, in an official marathon publication. [12]

Far from meeting its stated commitment to “rules that society expects of a responsible company”, Adidas has *knowingly* chosen to assist Israel with whitewashing its ethnic cleansing of Jerusalem and indeed its entire system of occupation, colonisation and apartheid. The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) therefore calls on people of conscience around the world to boycott all goods manufactured and sold by Adidas to hold it accountable for its complicity with Israel’s grave breaches of international law.

- [1] <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/04/20124417011120487.html>
- [2] <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/6/52/39674/Sports/National-Teams/Egypt-to-boycott-proIsrael-Adidas-kit-manufacturer.asp>
- [3] <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/567A1DA2BA02909F852578290053DD1D>
- [4] <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2011/adidas-feb11statement-5421#.T5j0NKuP-P8>
- [5] <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2011/alstom-loses-saudi-haramain-8253#.T5j4HKuP-P8>
- [6] The policies of the Jerusalem Municipality are widely documented. For one example see: www.alhaq.org/pdfs/Report%20-%20The%20Jerusalem%20Trap.pdf
- [7] <http://electronicintifada.net/content/athlete-abused-israeli-soldier-carrying-palestine-flag-jerusalem-marathon/11077>
- [8] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/feb/06/southafrica.israel>
- [9] <http://www.scribd.com/doc/78648359/EU-Heads-of-Mission-Report-Jerusalem-2011>
- [10] <http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/02/12/un-report-accuses-israel-of-pushing-palestinians-from-jerusalem-west-bank/>
- [11] <http://www.forward.com/articles/2070/>. Ben White provides a comprehensive discussion of the brand-Israel effort in <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article11093.shtml>
- [12] <http://electronicintifada.net/content/athlete-abused-israeli-soldier-carrying-palestine-flag-jerusalem-marathon/11077>