

Pharrell Williams Cancels Concert in Tel Aviv



New York, July 15 (RHC)-- U.S. singer and producer Pharrell Williams has cancelled a planned concert in Tel Aviv less than two weeks before the event, though it's unclear if the entertainer caved to pressure from the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction movement for an international embargo against Israel.

Representatives for Williams said the July 21st concert was cancelled due to last minute conflicts in Williams' schedule. Industry sources, however, claim that ticket sales had fallen below expectations, the Israeli daily Haaretz reported. A spokesman for Williams said that the concert will be rescheduled at a later date.

A 10-time Grammy Award winning artist and singer of the hit single "Happy," Williams has faced pressure not to carry through with his show in the Tel Aviv suburb of Rishon Letzion since plans for the concert surfaced last year, the Electronic Intifada reported.

The U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel wrote in an open letter to Williams last year that performing in Tel Aviv would show that he is "indifferent to the suffering of Palestinian children, who are denied the most basic rights by Israel."

Williams has also come under harsh fire from his sponsorship contract with Woolworths South Africa, a grocery-retailer facing a boycott since 2014 for selling Israeli products. The Palestinian Solidarity

Campaign in South Africa wrote in a statement last year that Williams' failure to respond to calls to cancel his Tel Aviv concert and agreement with Woolworths "make a mockery of his pretensions of human rights activism," noting in particular the "parallels of racial abuses in Israel and South Africa with the civil rights campaign in the United States."

The lyrics to Williams 2015 song "Freedom" include the line "I don't care who you are, where you're from, or how much you make, you deserve Freedom." The artist has received criticism for not living up to the views represented in his own music by not embracing the BDS campaign in solidarity with Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. Pharrell Williams has not responded publicly to the criticisms.

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