

Palestinian artists urge Eurovision singers to boycott Israel



Ramallah, May 9 (RHC)-- The Gaza-based Palestinian Artists Association is asking for Eurovision contestants to boycott the international music competition that Israel will be hosting from May 14th to the 18th in Tel Aviv, as it will be used to "perpetuate oppression, promote injustice or whitewash a brutal apartheid regime."

This week, the group held a sit-in outside the European Union's Gaza office and wrote a letter of protest. Israel gained the chance to host the event after Israeli singer Netta Barzilai became the 2018 edition winner on May 2018. Ever since, many artists from around the world and civil society organizations have called for a boycott based on the systematic killing of Palestinians and violations of international law.

More than 140 artists have called for boycotting the event. Earlier this year, 60 LGBTQ artists joined and in early April, 171 Swedish artists gave a similar call. However, none of the 42 acts taking part in the contest have pulled out.

Due to the fresh wave of attacks, Israel said that it will block activists from entering the country during the 64th annual song contest, fearing activists will protest the event to highlight Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

On April 17, international-renowned musician Roger Waters -- founder of the legendary rock band Pink Floyd -- wrote an open letter entitled: "If you believe in human rights, Madonna, don't play Tel Aviv." The letter was published in The Guardian prompting her to cancel her performance.

"To perform in Israel is a lucrative gig but to do so serves to normalize the occupation, the apartheid, the ethnic cleansing, the incarceration of children, the slaughter of unarmed protesters ... all that bad stuff," Waters wrote.

All these measures are part of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction (BDS) movement, started in 2005 by more than 200 Palestinian civil society organizations. The BDS initiative is modeled after the South African anti-apartheid movement, pushing for non-violent actions to pressure Israel to stop human right's violations and comply with international law.

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