

# NO CINEMA WITHOUT BOYCOTT



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## NO BOYCOTT NO CINEMA

### 1. PROPOSAL FOR A COLLECTIVE TEXT AND COMMITMENTS

We join the **NO CINEMA WITHOUT BOYCOTT** campaign and take a stance in favour of a cultural boycott of the State of Israel so that the crimes against Palestinians and the impunity that enables them cease. We call on our partners—film festivals, cultural organisations, cinemas, programmers, filmmakers, critics, and producers—to rally with us.

The campaign answers the call launched by Palestinian civil society, who initiated the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement in 2005, inspired by the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. Boycott is a powerful resistance strategy, and cultural boycott—undertaken by the academic and artistic wing of BDS, the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)—is a key element.

The genocide being perpetrated in Gaza by the colonial State of Israel, with active support from its Western accomplices, is arguably one of the darkest moments of the ethnic cleansing of Palestine that has been ongoing for more than 77 years, but it is neither the beginning nor the end. The ceasefire agreed upon in October 2025 does nothing to change about this situation and the fact of Israel's impunity when the Palestinian people's demands are clear and legitimate: an end to occupation and colonisation, dismantling the apartheid system, and the right of return for all refugees.

We denounce the new wars currently being waged against the Iranian and Lebanese peoples and the grave violations of international law that they constitute. The absence of sanctions and Israel's impunity in the destruction of Gaza and the genocide of the Palestinian people have paved the way for this endless expansion of the war, which has already claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and left millions of people forcibly displaced.

Culture is not merely a space for dialogue, encounters, and creation. Culture is a crucial instrument for the political legitimisation of a state. It is therefore one of the main showcases for Israel's "whitewashing" and the normalisation of its colonial policy, by promoting the image of a democratic, liberal, and critical Israel. But how can we legitimise continued cultural exchanges with a state that flagrantly disregards international law?

The cultural boycott does not target cultural workers as individuals, nor people because of their nationality: it targets productions and events funded or supported by Israeli cultural institutions complicit in the colonial and apartheid regime in Palestine. It affects the image and legitimacy of a state.

To contribute to applying this necessary pressure on Israeli institutions, we join the "NO CINEMA WITHOUT BOYCOTT" campaign as a concrete commitment not to collaborate with the State of Israel or any Israeli institution or company complicit in its policies.

We are convinced that, amid a rise of the far-right and concrete threats to our means of production and creation, culture must be seen not as a detached sphere of exchange and dialogue but as a space for collective organisation and action. Culture is a necessary vehicle for true social transformation. Our collective commitment to boycott is a first step towards the urgent need to resist together.

## OUR COMMITMENTS :

- To make our participation in the cultural boycott public.
- To not program or screen films financed and/or produced with the support of Israeli institutions or organisations complicit in the regime.
- To offer concrete opportunities to Palestinian artists and cultural workers (visas, invitations, fellowships, awards); to programme Palestinian films and events that make Palestinian narratives visible.
- To refuse to participate in, or sever ties with, events and activities wholly or partially sponsored or organised by the Israeli state or its complicit organisations (examples: Doc Aviv Festival, Jerusalem Film Festival). Individuals who officially represent the Israeli state, publicly support the ongoing genocide, or have fought in the Israeli army since October 2023 may also be targeted.
- To withdraw from ongoing collaborations and cut ties with Israeli institutional partners (examples: Israeli Film Fund, Israeli Embassy, CoPro – The Israeli Content Marketing Foundation, the Israeli public broadcaster Kan).
- To not take part in initiatives that present Israeli and Palestinian perspectives symmetrically, thus silencing the history of injustice and oppression and normalising Israeli colonial policies.
- To disseminate the boycott campaign throughout our sector: by organising courses on the cultural boycott, hosting collectives and organisations that actively make the boycott visible, publicly calling out institutions that collaborate with Israeli complicit partners and engaging in critical dialogue with them.
- To support the economic boycott of Israel by avoiding or terminating partnerships with complicit companies and brands (examples: AXA, BNP Paribas, Airbnb). Just as clauses exist for gender-based violence or climate impact in film contracts, similar legal clauses can identify and sever complicities (see « Palestine Legal » or « No Music For Genocide »).
- To continue to stay informed and support the Palestinian people's struggle for liberation.

## 2. CULTURAL BOYCOTT: FAQ

### WHY LAUNCH A CULTURAL BOYCOTT CAMPAIGN?

*The NO BOYCOTT NO CINEMA campaign answers the call of the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement. Launched in 2005, this mobilisation draws inspiration from the struggle against apartheid in South Africa and comes from many organisations within Palestinian society, an occupied and oppressed population. It is based on an appeal for international solidarity and respect for international law, aiming to pressure the Israeli regime so that the rights of Palestinians are fully recognised and respected.*

#### > What role does Israeli culture play in laundering the crimes and colonial policies of the Israeli state against the Palestinian people ?

Israeli culture is deliberately used by the Israeli state to improve Israel's international image, hide the realities of occupation and colonisation, and mask the crimes committed against Palestinians. It also serves to counter the BDS boycott. Culture is heavily employed in « hasbara », the Israeli government's propaganda apparatus aimed abroad, which seeks to legitimise the colonial policy, promote Zionism, and systematically attack any criticism. This effort is mainly driven by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

To project the image of a creative, open, and modern Israel and to wash its crimes against Palestinians, the Israeli government launched the « Brand Israel » propaganda campaign in 2005, which is a form of art-washing. The campaign is backed by substantial institutional resources, involving several ministries (Foreign Affairs, Tourism, Strategic Affairs) that coordinate these efforts to shape Israel's overseas image.

Example: The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, invited to the Paris Philharmonie on 6 November 2025, presents itself as a cultural ambassador for the Israeli state, aiming to improve Israel's international reputation. In 2024, the orchestra performed alongside members of the Israeli armed forces orchestra, wearing military uniforms.<sup>(1)</sup>

#### > What does a cultural boycott consist of ?

The cultural and academic component of BDS, the PACBI (Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel), provides very clearly formulated guidelines to help cultural actors in applying the boycott. Built around the central idea that the campaign targets institutions not individuals, the cultural boycott focuses on the notions of **complicity** and **normalisation**.

**Complicity** denotes any participation—active or passive—in the system of oppression, colonisation, and apartheid imposed on the Palestinian people. Being complicit means profiting from, collaborating with, or contributing to the normalisation of serious, ongoing violations of international law, whether through economic partnerships, cultural or academic exchanges, political support, or silence and inaction. No neutrality is possible in the face of injustice: cooperating with institutions, companies, or structures linked to these policies reinforces their legitimacy and durability. Refusing complicity means refusing to look away and choosing active solidarity with a people denied fundamental rights.

> **Which organisations are exempt from the boycott ?**

Israeli institutions and organisations are not considered complicit if they :

- a. Are not involved in serious human rights violations.
- b. Publicly denounce genocide, official apartheid policies, and the illegal occupation.
- c. Recognise the full rights of the Palestinian people as stipulated by the UN, including the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

> **What is cultural normalisation ?**

Normalisation means treating or presenting a fundamentally abnormal situation (such as oppression, occupation, or injustice) as if it were normal. Normalising Israel therefore entails portraying occupation, apartheid, and colonialism as ordinary and establishing routine relations with the Israeli regime instead of supporting the struggle of the indigenous Palestinian people to end their oppression.

Cultural normalisation refers to cultural practices that often claim to foster dialogue or exchange while presenting Israelis and Palestinians symmetrically, as if they enjoyed equal standing, thereby obscuring the systems of oppression and injustice that structure their relationship. Dialogues, « reconciliation » processes, or « peace-building » initiatives that do not aim to end oppression actually serve to sustain an oppressive coexistence, presuming a possibility of coexistence before justice is achieved.

Consequently, the cultural boycott follows a broad coalition of Palestinian civil society that refuses any “normal” cultural relations lacking equality, freedom, and justice for Palestinians. Collaborations are accepted only when they are explicitly a form of joint resistance against Israel’s occupation, colonisation, and apartheid, and only insofar as the Israeli side publicly recognises the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

Example: At a small scale, programming an Israeli film simultaneously with a Palestinian film « to show both sides » or « to foster dialogue » is an instance of cultural normalisation.

> **Why must support for the boycott be made public ?**

The boycott is a public, collective declaration. By signing, organisations and artists consent to having their names disclosed. In a context of systemic oppression, silence or neutrality constitutes a form of normalisation—or implicit tolerance of an unjust status quo. Publicising the boycott turns an individual, private act into a collective one, creating economic, diplomatic, and symbolic pressure that extends beyond the individual and enters the public sphere. Visibility also encourages other actors to join, amplifies the campaign, and makes clear that the target is state policies and institutional structures, not a particular population or identity.

> **When will the boycott be lifted ?**

The boycott is a civil-society pressure tool that is being deployed because political and sanction mechanisms have failed. It will be lifted when the fundamental rights of Palestinians under international law are fully respected. This means: an end to genocidal violence and a permanent ceasefire, as well as the end of apartheid, occupation, and colonisation, and the realisation of the right of return for all Palestinian refugees.

> **What other recent cultural boycott initiatives exist ?**

Since October 2023, numerous solidarity actions by the cultural sector for the Palestinian people have taken place. The boycott campaign has made significant progress internationally. In recent months, collective actions aimed at pressuring the State of Israel have multiplied:

- Over 5,000 film industry workers, including many Hollywood actors, have declared they will no longer collaborate with Israeli institutions. <sup>(2)</sup>
- More than 400 artists joined the « No Music For Genocide » campaign and pulled their music from streaming platforms in Israel. <sup>(3)</sup>
- Nearly 40 film industry figures demanded that Mubi drop its partnership with Sequoia, a company complicit in funding the Israeli war machine. <sup>(4)</sup>
- In October 2025, Belgian and Dutch artists and institutions launched a cultural boycott signed by venues such as Brussels' Théâtre National, Ancienne Belgique, KVS, Beursschouwburg, and the IDFA festival in Amsterdam. <sup>(5)</sup>
- After months of pressure, Marseille's Mucem ended its partnership with U.S. datacentre giant Digital Realty, accused of complicity with Israeli colonisation. <sup>(6)</sup>
- In November 2025, IDFA, Europe's largest documentary festival, announced, via its president, that it would boycott Israeli-complicit films and institutions during that edition. <sup>(7)</sup>

A longer list of calls for cultural boycott is available on the BDS website. <sup>(8)</sup>

## RESPONSES TO COMMON OBJECTIONS

### > Why continue to boycott Israel when there is a « ceasefire » ?

The boycott was created to end the impunity with which Israel exterminates the Palestinian population, destroys its culture, and makes life structurally impossible in the occupied territories. War crimes and violations of international law committed by Israel did not begin in October 2023; ethnic cleansing started in 1948 with the Nakba and the forced expulsion of more than 750,000 Palestinians. Moreover, in July 2024, the International Court of Justice ruled that the occupation of all Palestinian territories is illegal and that Israel must end it, dismantle the settlements, and repair the damage caused.

Since the signing of a « ceasefire » in October 2025, Israel has not halted bombings or military operations in Gaza, and humanitarian aid continues to face severe restrictions. The ceasefire does not constitute a process of justice or reparations for Palestinians. The West Bank remains subject to intense military operations, and Israeli settlement activity continues daily with great violence against Palestinian villages.

As explained earlier, the boycott will be lifted only when the rights of the Palestinian people, as guaranteed by international law, are fully respected, that is the end of genocidal violence and a permanent ceasefire plus the end of apartheid, occupation, colonisation, and the right of return for all Palestinian refugees.

### > Isn't art supposed to be a space for exchange and dialogue ? Does the cultural boycott violate freedom of expression ?

Calls for dialogue, plurality, and freedom of expression that are often raised against a cultural boycott obscure the structural oppression of the Palestinian people and divert attention from the massacres committed by Israel. Presenting art merely as a space for dialogue and exchange offers a romanticised view of culture that hides its ties to the state. The boycott campaign stresses that culture functions as soft power and is embedded in its production processes. In a context of structural domination, dialogue frequently acts as a screen that allows symbolic exchanges without ever challenging existing power relations. Under these conditions, dialogue is not a tool for transformation but an instrument of normalisation that helps make an unjust situation appear acceptable.

Far from shutting down spaces for discussion, the boycott is a distinct form of political speech. It unveils what some cooperation frameworks try to conceal: an asymmetrical conflict, power imbalances, and persistent impunity. By introducing a non-violent power dynamic, the boycott aims to break the illusion of dialogue and create conditions for an exchange founded on justice, equality, and accountability. Supporting the boycott called for by Palestinian civil society is therefore not a matter of personal opinion, it is a stance against colonial oppression.

> **Why only boycott Israel ?**

The cultural boycott of Israel does not claim to rank injustices worldwide. It responds to a specific call made in 2005 by a people living under occupation, colonisation, and an institutionalised regime of discrimination, and it is supported by numerous international bodies. Israel is targeted not because of its identity, but because it repeatedly breaches international law while enjoying massive political, military, economic, and cultural support from Western states, giving those states a direct lever of responsibility.

Boycotting Israel means refusing to normalise its crimes and affirming that no state is above the law. Ignoring the Palestinian call for international solidarity amounts to rejecting the agency and anti-colonial struggle of the Palestinian people. This does not preclude solidarity with other oppressed peoples; rather, it represents a coherent commitment to universal human rights, equality, and justice.

> **Won't the boycott harm progressive and critical Israeli voices ?**

The boycott targets institutions, not individuals. Moreover, an increasing number of progressive and critical Israelis support the boycott. For example, the Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem, in its July 2025 report « Our Genocide », calls for the use of all instruments of international law to end Israel's genocide of Palestinians. <sup>(9)</sup>

Within the film industry, in September 2025 a group of Israeli documentary filmmakers publicly called for an international boycott of Israeli film institutions that are complicit in the political apparatus and the war. <sup>(10)</sup>

Criticism of apartheid and the occupation has long been silenced in Israel. Many dissidents have left the country because expressing critical opinions has become increasingly difficult.

> **Do I expose myself to legal risks by joining the cultural boycott ?**

Attempts to criminalise BDS-related calls for boycott in France initially received legal backing through governmental circulars and national court decisions that treated such calls as incitement to discrimination or hate. However, European jurisprudence overturned this logic when the European Court of Human Rights unequivocally affirmed that freedom of expression protects peaceful boycott calls tied to matters of public interest. Consequently, the boycott campaign cannot be criminally prosecuted in France, as doing so would violate freedom of expression.

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION

### > Are individual artists or cultural workers also covered by the boycott ?

The cultural boycott called for by Palestinian civil society targets cultural works, products, activities, and institutions, not individuals or their personal identities. It is therefore not linked to nationality, religion, gender, ethnicity, or race.

When a person acts as an official representative of the Israeli state or of an Israeli cultural institution, or serves as a cultural ambassador for Israel, that falls under institutional boycott rather than a boycott of an individual.

### > Are there cases where artists can be boycotted individually ?

Anyone who actively defends war crimes, genocide, or justifies human rights violations may become the subject of a boycott that goes beyond the formal guidelines. This is sometimes referred to as a « common sense » boycott.

Example: A boycott was launched against a Disturbed concert at the Zénith in October 2025 after a photo surfaced (June 2024) showing vocalist David Draiman signing an artillery shell intended for use by the Israeli army in Gaza. By publicly endorsing the Israeli military and Prime Minister Netanyahu's policies, his involvement was deemed sufficient grounds for a targeted boycott—even though the band receives no financial, institutional, or logistical support from the Israeli state.

Following the International Criminal Court's arrest warrants issued in November 2024 against Israeli leaders, PACBI updated its guidelines, urging cultural institutions to refuse any platform to individuals suspected of participating in or supporting war crimes committed by Israel since October 2023. <sup>(11)</sup>

### > Can non-Israeli institutions that collaborate with the Israeli state be boycotted ?

The primary focus of the boycott is the Israeli state and the Israeli institutions, organisations, and companies that are directly complicit. However, the campaign also invites scrutiny of collaborations with other institutions that are complicit in human rights violations. For instance, a large mobilisation of film makers recently urged the streaming platform Mubi to end its partnership with Sequoia Capital, a venture fund that finances the Israeli military. Thus, while the core target remains Israeli entities, any foreign organisation that knowingly cooperates with or funds the Israeli apartheid/colonial system may be considered for boycott.

> **What tool can ensure that a film or cultural activity has no link of complicity with the Israeli colonial state ?**

Contractual clauses that reject any form of complicity with Israel and with any state or organisation that supports apartheid or commits war crimes can be incorporated into production agreements.

The collective « Filmworkers for Palestine » in collaboration with « Palestine Legal » and « Artists for Palestine UK » proposes the following wording for production contracts :

*« The film shall not be screened, exhibited, or distributed in any manner by any institution (including film festivals, cinemas, broadcast channels, or any other venue) that: 1. Is a partner, funded, sponsored, or operates under the aegis of a state or entity that has been accused of genocide before the International Court of Justice, or 2. Has been accused of crimes against humanity, including apartheid, by leading international tribunals or prominent human rights organisations. » <sup>(12)</sup>*

## NOTES

- (1) <https://www.bdsfrance.org/pourquoi-lorchestre-israelien-a-la-philharmonie-de-paris-est-boycottable/>
- (2) <https://filmworkersforpalestine.org/#endingcomplicity>
- (3) <https://nomusicforgenocide.org/>
- (4) <https://filmworkersforpalestine.org/#heymubi>
- (5) **The « No business as usual » campaign.**  
<https://www.cultureleboycotisrael.nu/accueil.html>
- (6) <https://www.bdsfrance.org/victoire-le-mucem-ne-renouvelle-pas-son-partenariat-avec-digital-realty/>
- (7) <https://deadline.com/2025/10/idfa-director-festival-israeli-state-backed-bodies-films-1236602672/>
- (8) **Websites of the BDS France coordinating groups** <https://www.bdsfrance.org/boycott-culture/>  
**and of BDS** <https://bdsmovement.net/>
- (9) [https://www.btselem.org/publications/202507\\_our\\_genocide](https://www.btselem.org/publications/202507_our_genocide)
- (10) <https://www.documentary.org/exclusive-news/open-letter-israeli-international-documentary>
- (11) <https://www.bdsfrance.org/directives-du-pacbi-concernant-les-films-israeliens-complices/>
- (12) <https://palestinelegal.org/> **and** <https://artistsforpalestine.org.uk/>

### 3. RESOURCES

#### REFERENCE WORKS

- *Omar Barghouti, Boycott, Désinvestissement, sanctions. BDS contre l'apartheid et l'occupation de la Palestine*, La Fabrique, 2010
- *Eyal Sivan et Armelle Laborie, Un boycott légitime. Pour le BDS universitaire et culturel de l'État d'Israël*, La Fabrique, 2016

#### PACBI GUIDELINES

- PACBI general directives : <https://www.bdsfrance.org/les-directives-pacbi-pour-le-boycott-culturel-international-disrael-revisees-en-juillet-2014-3/>
- PACBI film-specific directives (updated Nov 2025) : <https://www.bdsfrance.org/directives-du-pacbi-concernant-les-films-israeliens-complices/>
- Guidelines issued by PACBI on normalisation : <https://www.bdsfrance.org/communique-du-pacbi-lexception-israelienne-normalisation-de-lanormal/> and <https://www.bdsfrance.org/explication-des-directives-anti-normalisation-du-mouvement-bds/>

#### OTHER CAMPAIGNS

- The Belgian campaign « No business as usual » : <https://www.cultureleboycotisrael.nu/accueil.html>
- The international campaign of Filmworkers for Palestine : « Filmworkers Pledge to End Complicity » : <https://filmworkersforpalestine.org/#endingcomplicity>
- IDFA's decision : <https://deadline.com/2025/10/idfa-director-festival-israeli-state-backed-bodies-films-1236602672/>

#### EDUCATIONAL TOOLS AND ARTICLES ON THE CULTURAL BOYCOTT

- Article about the « No other Land » boycott controversy : <https://www.contretemps.eu/no-other-land-polemique/>
- Eyal Sivan's lecture on cultural boycott at Lussas, during the Etats Généraux du Documentaire festival in August 2025 : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YPa0KC2e14>
- Eyal Sivan's lecture on cultural boycott for ZinTV, in Brussels : <https://zintv.org/video/pour-le-boycott-universitaire-et-culturel-de-letat-disrael/>
- An educational tool on media coverage of the cancellation of Lavah Shani's concert by the Flanders Festival in Ghent : <https://zintv.org/outil/57922/>
- Ressources on our website : [lapalestinesauveralecinema.com](http://lapalestinesauveralecinema.com)