

## **Palestinian sports community appeal to UEFA – Red Card Israeli Apartheid**

Occupied Palestine - June 22 2011

Mr. Platini,

We, Palestinian footballers, athletes and sporting organizations and officials, are dismayed that Israel has been rewarded for its continued impunity and violent oppression of our people with the honour of hosting the UEFA Under-21 tournament in 2013. This decision is a drastic reversal of your brave stand just last year against Israeli attacks on Palestinian sport and its persistent violations of universal principles of human rights. You said: "We accepted them in Europe and furnished them the conditions for membership and they must respect the letter of the laws and international regulations otherwise there is no justification for them to remain in Europe. Israel must choose between allowing Palestinian sport to continue and prosper or be forced to face the consequences for their behaviour". We write today to remind you of the facts that no doubt informed this brave stance and to urge you to take steps to ensure that the 2013 tournament does not take place in Israel.

If this tournament goes ahead as planned, football fans from all over Europe and beyond will be given the impression that Israel is a country like any other, rather than one that practices a unique combination of occupation, colonization and apartheid against the indigenous Palestinian population. Games may be played at the Ramat Gan Stadium, which was built on land seized under the Absentee Property Owners Law of 1950, from the Palestinian villages of Jarisha and al-Jammasin al-Sharqi. Football should not preclude the refugees from these villages from returning to their lands, as is their UN-sanctioned right.

Israel's violations of international law are numerous and continue unabated and impact Palestinian football and the people of Palestine more generally. The infamous Israeli permit system, which has been used to deny so many Palestinians the right to travel, is reminiscent of the "pass laws" of Apartheid South Africa, and is used to deny footballers the right to travel to international tournaments, or even participate in local practices, in violation of Article 33 of the Geneva Conventions barring collective punishment.<sup>1</sup>

The use of overwhelming force in Operation Cast Lead in winter 2008-09 was responsible for leveling large swathes of Gaza including the Rafah National Stadium<sup>2</sup>, and killing football players Ayman Alkurd, Shadi Sbakhe and Wajeh Moshate, as well as over 1,400 other Gazans.<sup>3</sup>

Israel's Apartheid Wall, ruled illegal by the International Court of Justice in 2004, runs its eight-meter-high solid concrete course less than 100 meters away from the Faisal Al Hussein Stadium in Al-Ram, the current national stadium of Palestine.<sup>4</sup> The arbitrary arrest of thousands of Palestinians, including Gazan Palestinian National Team member Mahmoud Kamel As-Sarsak,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/federation/insidefifa/news/newsid=1305932.html>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=8960&ddname=detention&id\\_dept=9&p=center](http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=8960&ddname=detention&id_dept=9&p=center)

<sup>3</sup> <http://en.rian.ru/world/20090114/119490704.html>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/29/world/middleeast/29westbank.html?\\_r=1&hp](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/29/world/middleeast/29westbank.html?_r=1&hp)

held without trial or indeed public explanation for their arrest, is a routine tool of Israeli occupation.<sup>5</sup>

Israel's system of occupation, colonization and apartheid impacts Palestinian football and all Palestinians.

In the face of South African Apartheid, Ruud Gullit dedicated his 1987 European Footballer of the Year Award to Nelson Mandela. We call upon you to make a similar stand against Apartheid, by ensuring that Israel is not allowed to host the 2013 tournament, rather than allow the organization that you lead to reward Israel for its violent repression of Palestinian rights.

We look forward to your reply,

**SIGNED BY:**

**42 CLUBS**

Alwehda (unity) Club-Rafah  
Alasteqlal (independence) Club-Rafa  
Jamaa'i Rafah Club  
Alnuseirat Services Club  
Deir Elbalah Services Club  
Deir Elbalah Union Club  
Alsalah Charity Club  
Alwehda Club- Jabalia  
Jabalia Youths Club  
Beit Hanoun Civil Club  
Beit Lahyia Club  
Albureij Services Club  
Alaqsa Club-Alnuseirat  
Almaghazi Services Club  
Alnuseirat Services Club  
Alzawaida Youth Club  
Jabalia Union Club  
Ansaar Jabalia Club  
Alkarama Club  
Gaza Sporting Club  
Rafah Youths Club  
AlTarabot Club- Deir Albalah  
Albureij Civil Club  
Alredwan Club  
Hetteen Club  
Alta3awn (Cooperation) Club  
Alwefaq Club  
Aljazeera Club

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=8960&ddname=detention&id\\_dept=9&p=center](http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=8960&ddname=detention&id_dept=9&p=center)

Alyarmouk Club  
Alrayaan Club  
Albureij Youths Club  
Alrebaat Club  
Alzawaida Union Club  
Almaghazi Youths Club  
Alqarara Club  
Alataa' Althahabi Club  
Alshaf3' Club  
Alshareqa Club  
Canada Club  
Alqadessia Club  
Tel Alsoultaan Club  
Sports College—Al-Aqsa University

### **18 Club Managers and Players**

Ibrahim Abu Salim (Vice President-Football Union)  
Captain Hasaan Salah (vice president of soccer players veterans)  
Captain Zoheir Edwan (President—Al-Wehda Club)  
Captain Joma' Alakhras (President-Al Estiqlal Club)  
Captain Fathy Abu Ella (Rafah Services Club)  
Captain Kamal Alashqar (Nusairat Services Club)  
Captain Jamal Albuheissy (Deir El Balah Services Club)  
Captain Jaber Ayaash (El Salah Club)  
Captain Eissa Zaher (President-Jabalia Youth Club)  
Captain Amer Alemawi (President-Beit Hanoun National Club)  
Captain Sameer Albarawi (President-Beit Lahia National Club)  
Captain Mohammed Abo Shoqwa (President- Bureij Services Club)  
Captain Mohammed Zureid (President-Al-Aqsa Club)  
Captain Iyaad Alhozoqi (President-Nusairat National Club)  
Captain Jalal Abu Zayed (President-Al Zawaida Club)  
Captain Mousa Abu Zeer (President-Gaza Sporting Club)  
Captain Islam Qeshtaa  
Ali Rabei (President-Rafah Jamaai Club)

### **Plus 19 other Palestinian sporting figures**

Naser Dababesh, club head, Al Ahli Palestinian Club  
Nather Gaber, coach, Al Repat Palestinian Club  
Salah Gber, vice-president, Deir El-Balah Youth Union  
Abdallah al Saqa, soccer player, Al Sadaqa Club  
Mohammed abu Aita, soccer player, Al Sadaqa Club  
Islam Salama, soccer player, Al Beach Club  
Iyad al Jiesh, soccer player, Disabled Union

Mazen Sarhan, board member, Disabled Union  
Abed Rabo al Tahrawi, board member, Al Redwan Club  
Wesam Jadallah, volleyball player, Al Sadaqa Sports Club  
Yasser Dawood, volleyball player, Al Sadaqa Sports Club  
Asa'd al Majdalawi, volleyball player, Al Sadaqa Sports Club  
Khaled Shameia, club head, Al Naser Arab Club  
Ali Abu Hasheesh, club head, Al Beach Club  
Saeb Jondeya, soccer player, Al Sheja'ia Club  
Naim Sweerki, coach, Al Sheja'ia Club  
Amer Abu Ramadan, club head, Al Helal Club  
Tayseer Abed al Jawad, union head, Handball Union  
Ramzi Jaber, sports teacher, Al Aqsa University