



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

BNC member organizations:

Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine

Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO)

Palestinian Nat'l Institute for NGOs

Global Palestine Right of Return Coalition

Palestinian Trade Union Coalition for BDS (PTUC-BDS)

Federation of Indep. Trade Unions

Gen. Union of Palestinian Workers

Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions

Gen. Union of Palestinian Women

Union of Palestinian Farmers

Gen. Union of Palestinian Teachers

Gen. Union of Palestinian Writers

Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees (PFUPE)

Union of Professional Associations

Gen. Union of Palestinian Peasants

Union of Public Employees in Palestine-Civil Sector

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

Occupied Palestine and Syrian Golan Heights Initiative

Boycott New Balance and Crowne Plaza over their sponsorship of apartheid marathon

March 12, 2014, Occupied Palestine - The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), the largest coalition of Palestinian civil society unions, political parties and organisations, calls on people of conscience around the world to take concrete measures to boycott and/or work towards divestment from US footwear manufacturer New Balance and hotel chain Crowne Plaza until such time as they end their involvement in the so-called "Jerusalem Marathon" as well as in any other Israeli events that similarly serve to whitewash Israel's violations of international law and ethnic cleansing in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

The route of the "Jerusalem Marathon," which is organized by the Jerusalem Municipality in partnership with Israeli government ministries, entities that are deeply complicit in the oppression of the Palestinian people and the denial of their rights, passes through occupied East Jerusalem. In addition, the marathon is used to cover up Israel's image around the world while acting as a smokescreen to its illegal annexation of and gradual ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the occupied city.

New Balance and the InterContinental Hotels Group, of which Crowne Plaza is part, ignored calls last year to withdraw sponsorship for the marathon and are again lending their names to the event.¹ The growth of the BDS movement worldwide shows that corporations can no longer enable and profit from the decades-long violations of Palestinian human rights without paying the costs for their complicity. International BDS campaigns have led corporations to lose lucrative contracts and to suffer reputational damage for association with Israel's three-tiered regime of occupation, colonialism and apartheid. Corporations are gradually realizing that Israel's persistent violation of international law makes doing business with it fraught with risks, and many, particularly in Europe, are taking proactive steps to "clean" their investments from complicity with Israeli violations of international law.²

Adidas, a sponsor of the Jerusalem marathon in previous years, was forced to end its involvement after the Arab Youth and Sports Council of Ministers committed to exclude the company from contracts in the region, where Adidas has substantial interests.³

Sponsorship of the marathon by New Balance and Crowne Plaza plays into the official Israeli propaganda. The official publicity for the marathon touts Jerusalem as a tourist destination, rich in cultural diversity and in history. Not mentioned are Israel's efforts to consistently, systematically, and quite blatantly "Judaize"⁴ Jerusalem through policies of ethnic cleansing directed at the indigenous Palestinian population to change the demographic reality of the occupied city, in

contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention and international human rights law.

According to UN Rapporteur for Human Rights in the OPT Richard Falk Palestinians in Jerusalem are “subject to a gradual and bureaucratic process of ethnic cleansing.” Since 1996, an estimated 11,023 Jerusalem Palestinians have lost their resident status and banned from entering the city. During the period 2004–2013, Israel demolished 492 houses of Palestinians living in the city, displacing 1,943 people.⁵ Falk concludes that businesses profiting from Israel’s colonial activities ought to be boycotted for the role they play in enabling Israel’s abuses.⁶ Furthermore, a report by European Union Heads of Mission in Jerusalem stated that “the continued expansion of [colonial] settlements, restrictive zoning and planning, ongoing demolitions and evictions, an inequitable education policy, difficult access to health care, the inadequate provision of resources and investment and the precarious residency issue have not only serious humanitarian consequences, they undermine the Palestinian presence in East Jerusalem.”⁷

Accusing Israel of a "strategy of Judaization" in East Jerusalem and elsewhere, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, Raquel Rolnik, wrote in 2012: “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.”

The Jerusalem Municipality, the party responsible for the implementation of these policies, is a key node in the official Israeli structure of colonialism and apartheid and a leading violator of Palestinian human rights. Since its inception, it has been a major instrument in the colonization of Israeli-occupied Jerusalem. It is particularly notable for its role in promoting and deepening one of the starkest cases of urban apartheid in the world. The municipality continues to be actively involved in the illegal gradual ethnic cleansing of Palestinians out of Jerusalem, the demolition of Palestinian homes and destruction of property, and the sustained suppression of development in the Palestinian neighborhoods as a matter of policy.⁸

The marathon is part of an ongoing process to institutionalize Israel’s hold on the occupied city. Israel militarily occupied the western part of Jerusalem in 1948, after depopulating 38 Palestinian villages and appropriating the lands and properties of its residents, rendering them refugees and denying them reparations, including their UN-sanctioned right of return. The world community does not recognize any part of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, particularly because under UN General Assembly resolution 181 (1947) Jerusalem was established as a *corpus separatum* under a special international regime. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People confirmed that city’s status remains such.⁹ In 1967, Israel occupied East Jerusalem, unilaterally annexing it as part of its “united capital.”

Due to these factors combined, governments have refrained from recognizing Israel’s actions in the city, including the racist manipulation of its demographic composition, one that limits the number of Palestinians in favor of Israeli Jews.¹⁰ The UN has maintained several times 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.”¹¹ The partnership with the Jerusalem Municipality, on east or west of the city, violates these long held precepts of international law.

Furthermore, the organizers of the marathon make no secret that the event is to be used to rebrand Israel's image abroad. Runners will pass through Jerusalem's key sites and through occupied east Jerusalem. Its other partners include the Ministry of Tourism and the Israeli security establishment responsible for war crimes.

Condemned as a state that is practicing occupation, colonization and apartheid by a 2009 authoritative legal study in South Africa¹², Israel prevents millions of Palestinians who live just minutes away from their capital to access Jerusalem, as part of its regime of separation, including the wall, declared illegal by the International Court of Justice in 2004, and a strict regime of residency permits. According to the 1985 International Convention Against Apartheid in Sports, "sports contact with any country practicing apartheid in sports condones and strengthens apartheid."¹³

It is thus not surprising that the Jerusalem marathon website refers to East Jerusalem as "mostly the home of former Jordanian citizens,"¹⁴ painting Palestinians as foreigners instead of the indigenous people of the land. This attitude is consistent with Israel's ongoing erasure of Palestinian historical presence in the city, including the ongoing wave of demolitions of Palestinian homes in Silwan to turn the area into an "archeological park" and "tourism center"¹⁵ for extremist settlers at the expense of the local Palestinian population who live in fear of constant violent harassment¹⁶.

UN Special Rapporteur Richard Falk said of the plan that "international law does not allow Israel to bulldoze Palestinian homes to make space for the mayor's project to build a garden, or anything else," adding that the plan "should be seen within the context of Israel's persistent, systematic approach to driving Palestinians out of East Jerusalem." This comes after decades of Israeli crimes including the erasure of over 500 Palestinian villages in 1948, the willful destruction of the Moroccan Quarter in the old city of Jerusalem in 1967, and the more recent desecration of the historic cemetery of Ma'man Allah ("Mamilla") in West Jerusalem, for the purposes of building a so-called "Museum of Tolerance," all sites marathon runners will pass through.

In light of the warnings given to New Balance and InterContinental Hotels Group, of which Crowne Plaza is part, and their repeated sponsorship of the "Jerusalem Marathon" this year underlines their insistence on profiting from human rights violations. The Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC) calls on people of conscience worldwide to boycott and divest from New Balance and Crowne Plaza Hotels, and launch concerted and well coordinated campaigns in that direction, to hold them accountable for their complicity with Israel's grave breaches of international law.

- BNC Secretariat

¹ http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/23/world/middleeast/palestinians-threaten-to-boycott-sponsors-of-jerusalem-marathon.html?_r=0

² See <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/articles/debate/10144-spring-in-the-step-of-bds-as-a-worried-israel-plans-pushback>

³ <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4212689,00.html>

⁴ See, for example, UN Special Rapporteur, Prof. John Dugard, Human Rights Situation in Palestine and other Occupied Arab Territories (A/HRC/7/17, January 2008).

⁵ http://www.eccpalestine.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Falk_Final_Report_Feb2014.pdf

⁶ <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43376>

⁷ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12150792#sthash.I5qhE9CO.dpuf>

⁸ The policies of the Jerusalem Municipality are widely documented. For one example see: www.alhaq.org/pdfs/Report%20-%20The%20Jerusalem%20Trap.pdf

⁹ <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/651C804E6815FB28852575DF004B7C4C#sthash.I5qhE9CO.dpuf>

¹⁰ UN OCHA (page 14) http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_planning_crisis_east_jerusalem_april_2009_english.pdf

¹¹ <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/567A1DA2BA02909F852578290053DD1D#sthash.I5qhE9CO.dpuf>

¹² <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/Document-3227.phtml#sthash.I5qhE9CO.dpuf>

¹³ <http://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%201500/volume-1500-I-25822-English.pdf#sthash.I5qhE9CO.dpuf>

¹⁴ http://www.jerusalem.muni.il/jer_sys/marathon11/eng/MarathonInner.asp?Bhtml_id=-

¹⁵ [1&Button_id=0&msg_id=11842&src=http://www.jerusalem.muni.il/jer_sys/publish/chaptersView.asp?pub_id%3D38531](http://www.jerusalem.muni.il/jer_sys/publish/chaptersView.asp?pub_id%3D38531)

¹⁵ Why 88 Arab homes received eviction notices <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2009/0226/p04s01-wome.html>

¹⁶ The dig dividing Jerusalem <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/may/26/jerusalem-city-of-david-palestinians-archaeology>