



15 June 2015

SUBJECT: RED SEA JAZZ FESTIVAL – ISRAELI BOYCOTT

Dear Mr Vieux Farka Touré

We refer to your planned performance at the Red Sea Jazz Festival in Eilat in Israel in August 2015 the details of which our comrades in the United States have informed us of. As BDS South Africa we are a part of the the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) and support their call to you to respect the boycott of Israel.

We are aware that PACBI has already sent you correspondence detailing the impact of apartheid Israel's oppressive and unlawful occupation of Palestinian territory as well as its gross violation of the human rights of Palestinians. We do not intend to repeat the same detail in this letter.

The purpose of this letter is to write to you as fellow Africans who have lived and continue to live with the shadow of the legacy of colonialism and apartheid hanging over us. Fortunately for us, partly due to the immense support of international entities and individuals supporting the boycott of apartheid South Africa, a new democratic and egalitarian dispensation was ushered in 21 years ago. However, the brutal legacy of apartheid continues to plague our society. As a fellow African, whose ancestors lived through the tumultuous years of colonialism and the resistance towards oppressive colonial domination we trust that you understand the plight of those who continue to suffer under conditions of occupation, oppression and torture, such as the Palestinians.

Your collaboration with Mr Idan Raichel, who, as you may know, is a blatant supporter of Israel's discriminatory policies and its defense forces, has always been concerning. However, far more troubling is your intention to break the cultural boycott against Israel by performing at the Red Sea Jazz Festival in Eilat. Should you proceed to attend and perform at this event, or any other event in Israel until it halts its policy of occupation and repression against the Palestinians, your conduct would effectively signal the condonation of apartheid Israel's unlawful and oppressive policies towards the Palestinians. Such an action would constitute a blotch on the proud history of Africans rising up against oppression, occupation and colonialism. It was your fellow musician from the Sahel, Dimi Mint Abba who your respected father highly recommended, who advocated for the destruction of apartheid in South Africa through her music. She not only sang but transformed her art into an instrument of opposition to an evil system of discrimination and suffering. Dimi Mint Abba proclaimed

BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL IN SOUTH AFRICA (BDS SOUTH AFRICA)

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loudly in song “O Lord, Bring apartheid crashing down! Apartheid is colonisation with not a bit of humanity... A criminal, his crime so abundantly clear, an oppressor of so many persons held dear...”

As fellow Africans and victims of apartheid in South Africa who stand in solidarity with our oppressed Palestinian brothers and sisters, we request that you respect and uphold the boycott against apartheid Israel by not performing at the Red Sea Jazz Festival in Eilat, and like your fellow Sahel artist and forebear, Dimi Mint Abba, transform your artistic voice and influence into a beautiful and powerful instrument that recognises the dignity of the powerless and speaks truth to power.

When artists and sportspeople began refusing to perform in apartheid South Africa, the world’s eyes turned to the injustices that were happening here. This then created a wave of pressure, which ultimately contributed to a free, democratic and non-racial South Africa. The same is not only possible for Palestine-Israel, but also inevitable. The question is: On which side of history does one want to be? Performing in apartheid South Africa – in violation of what us oppressed black South Africans and our white allies asked for – during the 1980s was to be on the wrong side of history. Today, performing in Israel – in violation of what the oppressed Palestinians and their progressive Israeli allies have asked for – is choosing to be on the wrong side of history. We hope that you will choose to be on the right side of history and not entertain apartheid.

Yours sincerely,

Kwara Kekana

BDS South Africa Spokesperson

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