

From Israeli musicians to A-Ha - Don't take part in Apartheid. Refuse to play in Israel.

Dear A-Ha,

We are two Israeli musicians and activists, and we write this letter to you in order to encourage you not to take part in apartheid, and refuse to play in Israel.

First of all, we would like to say that, as artists, we believe that we should take a stand with the oppressed and make our voice heard in any way possible, and not only through our music, especially in these hectic and volatile times.

Israel constantly silences Palestinian art and culture. Palestinian poet Dareen Tatour, has been persecuted and held under house arrest for two years, simply for writing a poem. Her trial is still ongoing. Palestinian rapper Tamer Nafar, has joined a line of indigenous musicians being persecuted by Israel, with Israel's Minister of Culture and Sports, Miri Regev, officially targeting him and openly aiming to silence him by canceling his performances in Israel. Violent protests were held outside his concerts as a means of silencing him. When it comes to Palestinian theatres, right wing politicians are in the process of closing several of them down, just like al-Midan Theatre in Haifa, the only Arabic theatre in Israel that receives state funding. In addition, Israel has ordered the cancellation of a children's puppet festival in el-Hakawati Theatre in East Jerusalem, claiming that it has been unlawfully sponsored by the Palestinian Authority.

When it comes to the Palestinian citizens of Israel, which make for over 20% of Israelis, they are subject to a system of over 60 discriminative laws, decades-long processes of systematic, de-development, gentrification, ghettoisation, and impoverishment that results in infant mortality rate three times higher than Israel's Jewish citizens. Persecution of Palestinian political parties, parliamentarians, and public servants, is escalating, while Israeli-Jewish politicians and public figures continue their unabated incitement to genocide against the indigenous Palestinian minority, with brutal results often meted out by Israeli civilians as well as armed forces.

In addition, Israel has been holding the indigenous population living in the West Bank and Gaza under violent military occupation, deprived of basic human rights, with no dignity, and no freedom. Israel is also conducting a slow genocide in Gaza, as well as belligerent siege.

Israel is constantly using artists such as yourselves to whitewash its crimes, when in fact it silences divergent narrative and voices, especially those who do not abide with its racist indoctrination. International artists performing in Israel are in fact taking part in belligerent military occupation, a brutal system of apartheid, and a slow genocide. When performing in Israel, one is performing in front of the strong, violent, and privileged population, while those being constantly discriminated against remain in the shadows and open to brutal apartheid crimes.

That said, if you do decide to come and perform, we invite you to take a tour in the Occupied Palestinian territories, and see this brutal reality for yourselves.

Both of us that write to you today, as artists and activists, have been active to change this forlorn reality, hence we have come to realize that change will not come from within the Israeli society, but from outside pressure. We believe the BDS is a powerful non-violent way to exert such pressure that is ultimately aimed at bringing peace and justice to all.

With this decision you can make a stand, you can be a voice, you can change the world. It is up to you.

Sincerely,

David Oppenheimer
Danielle Ravitzki