



## Boycott Divestment Sanctions

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

### Member organizations:

- Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine
- General Union of Palestinian Workers
- Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions
- Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO)
- Federation of Independent Trade Union
- Union of Arab Community Based Associations (ITTIAH)
- Palestine Right of Return Coalition
- Occupied Palestine and Golan Heights Initiative
- General Union of Palestinian Women
- Union of Palestinian Farmers
- Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (STW)
- Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)
- National Committee to Commemorate the Nakba
- Civic Coalition for the Defense of Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem (CCDPRJ)
- Coalition for Jerusalem
- Union of Palestinian Charitable Organizations

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Palestine, October 2008

## **Don't give the stage to Israeli Apartheid! Boycott the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra!**

The Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC) calls on the hosts in the fourteen American cities where the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra is scheduled to perform between October 26, 2008 and November 16, 2008 to rescind their invitations to the Orchestra. We urge the hosts to support the [Palestinian civil society's call for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel](#), including the boycott of Israeli cultural institutions.

This year, the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra is performing a special program in the US honouring the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Orchestra and of the establishment of the state of Israel. Such celebrations of Israeli statehood are a means to cover up the Nakba, or catastrophe, that was inflicted upon the indigenous Palestinian population by Zionist forces in 1948, when 750,000 Palestinians were forcefully expelled from their lands in a systematic ethnic cleansing program that continues to this day. In a statement published in the International Herald Tribune in May 2008, more than fifty prominent international writers, musicians, and other artists led by Palestinian national poet Mahmoud Darwish commemorated this wholesale dispossession under the slogan "[No Reason to Celebrate Israel at 60!](#)," urging fellow cultural figures not to take part in such a deceptive celebration.

The Orchestra's program is also particularly focused on the American Jewish community, as it is intended to create a connection between them and Israel. At the same time, some six million Palestinian refugees live in the Diaspora, and most of them are prohibited from returning to their homeland due to discriminatory Israeli laws and policies.

Since the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra is one of the primary promoters and exporters of Israeli cultural life, one of its functions is to boost Israel's image on the world stage. In this way, the truth about the Israeli occupation of Palestine becomes suppressed, and its institutionalized attacks on Palestinian cultural heritage are ignored. Any attempt by the US hosts of the tour to develop ties with this Orchestra, therefore, amounts to condoning Israeli apartheid.

As such, we call upon the Orchestra's scheduled hosts to be mindful of the [appeal issued in 2006 by Palestinian filmmakers, artists and cultural workers](#)

calling on filmmakers and artists worldwide to cancel art exhibitions planned in Israel, to boycott Israeli film festivals, Israeli cultural venues, and to end all cooperation with Israeli art, film and cultural organizations and institutions sponsored by the Israeli government.

We urge the hosts to condemn Israel for its racist and discriminatory practices, rather than condoning them. Finally, we call upon all American citizens of conscience to support the Palestinian BDS Call, and to boycott all cultural institutions supported by the apartheid Israeli state.

*Steering Committee of the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee  
(BNC)*