



Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign

18 Capel Street, Dublin 1, Ireland

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info@ipsc.ie

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Dear Seamus O'Sé,

I am writing on behalf of the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign to clear up some confusion regarding an email seemingly sent by yourself to one Maire Ni Bhriain which has been passed on to us by a third party. In this message you claim that "it has come to my attention that the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign have now begun targeting OID - osheairishdance.com and their associated Twitter and Facebook accounts".

However, this statement is false. Ms. Ni Bhriain is not a representative of the IPSC, nor has the IPSC been "targeting" O'Shea Irish Dance, a dance company based in the US and run by your son and his wife. The IPSC's campaign thus far has been limited to privately appealing via a letter to yourself and your wife not to attend the Israeli Feis (a correspondence to which we received no response), and privately and publicly appealing to the CLRG to withdraw their promotion of, and support for, the event. Other than this, the only action we have taken is to encourage people to sign a petition created by the Irish Palestinian Activist Collective (who you appear to be mixing up with the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign), and sharing some images of Palestinians and statements from Israeli citizens asking you not to break the boycott.

If people on social media have been making a connection between the event, your own participation in said event, and the OID then it certainly has not been an action directed or recommended by the IPSC. A look at our Facebook or Twitter feeds will show you there is no mention by us of OID -

https://twitter.com/ipsc48/with_replies or <http://www.facebook.com/IrelandPSC>

You mention the *Sunday Times* article which was misleading in several respects, not merely in regard to what a feis is or isn't - and to critique it fully would take several hundred words. However, we have sought changes to the online version of the article which erroneously claimed that the IPSC was behind both the petition and the 'social media campaign'. This despite the journalist being told clearly prior to publication that neither was the case, but that the IPSC would make still make a statement on the issue (which I copy below for the record). We have since asked the journalist to correct the piece online, which has been partially done, though still not to our satisfaction.

Commenting on the proposed Israeli Feis a spokesperson for the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC) said:

"As supporters of the Palestinian civil society call for a cultural boycott of Israel, we strongly encourage international Irish dancers, musicians, teachers and fans not to attend the Israeli Feis. Whatever the intentions of those participating, the Israeli state has made it clear that it sees cultural events like this a propaganda tool to whitewash, or in this case 'greenwash', its apartheid policies, its brutal military occupation, and its regular attacks on the people of Palestine such as last summer's slaughter in Gaza which left more than 2,200 people dead, including over 500 children. Similarly we ask the Coimisiun Le Rinci Gaelach to cease its tacit support for and promotion of this event and to stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine, including Palestinian Dabke dancers and musicians, who suffer as a result of Israel's policies."



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"Palestinian culture, including Palestine's famed Dabke step-dance, is a frequent target of the Israeli state, whether it is manifested in the killing or imprisonment of poets, dancers, musicians, actors, directors and writers, the banning of literature festivals, or the suppression of Palestinian historical narratives. As with South African apartheid in the last century, every cultural event staged within Israel that is attended or promoted by international cultural figures or organisations necessarily plays a part in helping to normalise crimes and violations of cultural and human rights perpetrated by the state."

"That culture and the fight against this oppression are inextricably linked is recognised by the more than 500 Irish creative and performing artists that have already signed up to the Irish Artists' Pledge to Boycott Israel, including musicians like Donal Lunny, Frances Black, Andy Irvine, Sharon Shannon, Damien Dempsey, Róisín Elsafty and Paul Brady, and Irish dancers like Colin Dunne, Declan McHale and Seosamh O Neachtain. In 2011 the renowned artist Robert Ballagh, set designer for Riverdance and endorser of the boycott, refused to join the Riverdance tour in Israel and instead donated his royalties to the Irish Ship to Gaza. These artists are part of a growing list of international artists like Roger Waters, Lauryn Hill, Ken Loach, Mira Nair, Nigel Kennedy, Cat Power and Elvis Costello who have refused to perform in Israel as an act of solidarity with the Palestinian people and to help end Israel's occupation and regular violations of international law."

As you have indicated in the email to Ms. Ni Bhriain (though, it must be pointed out, not to us) that *nothing* will change your mind on this issue it seems there is little point in continuing a dialogue with you and your partner as individuals who have chosen to break the boycott. It is heartbreaking that you would choose to ignore the calls from Palestinian civil society, from Palestinian dancers, musicians, singers, artists, writers, musicians, poets, human rights activists and everyday people not to help whitewash their oppression by the Israeli state, but ultimately the choice is yours alone to make.

By way of one final appeal, we attach an image of the Lajee Dabke Dancers from Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem making their feelings on the matter known. These young dancers, from families expelled from Israel in 1948 who are not allowed to return to their homes, face daily intimidation, harassment and violence from the Israeli occupation army. Members of the Lajee Cultural Centre have been tear-gassed, beaten, arrested, tortured and shot - yet all they ask for is internationals to observe the call for a cultural boycott of Israel. We also attach similar images from Bil'in - the Palestinian village at the centre of the Oscar nominated documentary 'Five Broken Cameras' whose land is being stolen by Israel - and a statement from Jewish Voice for Peace (Ireland).

Sincerely,

Martin O'Quigley,
IPSC Chairperson