

11 April 2019

The Editor, The Times newspaper,

We are writing regarding your 10<sup>th</sup> April front page headline, “Madonna to defy boycott of Tel Aviv Eurovision”.

The casual reader could be forgiven for assuming that one of the world’s most successful musicians is defying an official boycott of this year’s Eurovision Contest. They could be forgiven for feeling angry toward Madonna. They could be forgiven because the headline, like so many where Israel is concerned, is entirely misleading.

It is misleading because there is absolutely no official boycott of the Eurovision. The only calls to boycott the Eurovision on the grounds that it is being hosted in Israel (because Israel won last year’s Eurovision) are made by the BDS movement, other pro-Palestinian groups and their supporters. Let’s remind ourselves that the BDS movement’s own stated goal is to eradicate Israel from the family of nations. Let’s remind ourselves that the overwhelming majority of pro-Palestinian groups are actually nothing of the sort. They are simply anti-Israel, targeting the Jew amongst the nations and holding Israel, and only Israel, as responsible for a decades-old conflict which history can prove was started by Arab aggression. The BDS movement, other pro-Palestinian groups and their supporters are vociferous and relentless in their championing the right of self-determination for the Palestinians whilst being equally vociferous and relentless in seeking to deny the right of self-determination for Jews. There is a word for that and that word describes what is often coined as “the world’s oldest hatred”.

Whilst focusing on those groups and individuals who describe themselves as pro-Palestinian but are mostly just anti-Israel, let’s remind ourselves that these self-declared so-called “human rights activists” routinely fail to condemn the very real human rights violations carried out by so many dictatorial regimes around the world. And perhaps even more enlightening as to their rank bias and real motive is the fact that these groups and individuals routinely fail to condemn the terrorist actions of Hamas in Gaza, they fail to condemn the overt shows of support for terrorism by the Palestinian Authority in Judea and Samaria (aka the West Bank) and they fail overwhelmingly to condemn both sets of “leaders” for their crushing treatment of Palestinian dissenters, journalists, students and other Palestinian groups and individuals who dare to speak out against their respective regimes - individuals who are routinely rounded up, kidnapped, imprisoned and tortured for having dared to do speak out.

The article cites France’s French Television network as having confirmed that they will not be boycotting the event because “song has no frontiers”. Curiously, but unsurprising, this article in The Times, itself a British newspaper, makes no mention of our own BBC’s refusal, in January 2019, to cave into demands made by the aforementioned groups to boycott this year’s Eurovision. The article also cites the American so-called Jewish group ‘Jewish Voice for Peace’, itself a misleading name because its own acknowledged goal is to divide Jews and eliminate the Jewish State. There is nothing peaceful about that, not by any stretch of the imagination. And as for some LGBT groups supporting these calls to boycott, they would serve their cause far better by rallying in solidarity with their LGBT brother and sisters in Gaza and the West Bank whose lives are, at best, lived under the radar of the autocratic and homophobic leaders in both regions and at worst, whose lives are lived under persecution, imprisonment, torture and yes, murder.

So, let’s be clear.

There is no official boycott of Eurovision 2019.

The only calls for boycott are being made by those groups described above, and their supporters, some of them of varying degrees of celebrity status, but who all share one thing in common.

Not peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Not a better future for the Palestinians.

Just the destruction of Israel, the Jew amongst the nations.

And there is a word for that.

Paul Charney

**Chairman of the Zionist Federation of the UK and Ireland**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Charney'.

**ZF**

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