

Statement: No Celebrations of the Zionist Congress

03.07.2017

Categories: Andere

Statement: Celebrations of 120 years since the first Zionist Congress

According to media reports, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu intended to celebrate the 120th anniversary of the first Zionist Congress in Basel this summer. After a period of vagueness, the government of Basel announced in a press release (2017-06-16) that the celebrations cannot be held at the end of August for organizational reasons (security) but the public authorities are willing to cooperate if the presenters want to organize such an event at a later date.

As persons and organizations committed to the fundamental rights in general and particularly concerned about those of the Palestinians, we are calling upon the relevant political institutions not to provide any political and logistical support for the implementation of such ceremonies at any moment.

First, because the city of Basel should give no recognition or assistance to the Israeli government – the most right wing one since the state's creation – for a celebration of its racist and oppressive policies against the Palestinian people.

Israel's institutional discrimination against Palestinians as well as its systematic contempt of the norms of international law has been present since its inception. Political figures can make racist slurs referring to Palestinians and their political representatives with no fear of reprisals.¹ The basic rights of the non-Jewish population of Israel as well as Israelis who oppose government policy are under threat.²

Secondly, because the record of human rights abuses perpetuated by the state of Israel in the name of Zionist ideology can no longer be ignored.

120 year ago, the future development of Zionism perhaps was still open to debate, even if it was clearly situated in the context of European colonialism. Today, however, it is evident that the institutionalization of the Zionist ideology by the state of Israel has resulted in discriminatory laws, policies and practices that constitute a system of apartheid and ongoing settler-colonialism which systematically oppresses the Palestinian people, refugees, citizens of Israel and those in the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT) since 1967.

The history of the Zionist state has been marked by a series of violations of fundamental human rights and

of international humanitarian law which primarily include:

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The expulsion of some 85% of the native Palestinian population (between 750 000 and one million people) from their homeland and the destruction or confiscation of their property during the Nakba 1947–1949³. The Palestinians refugees have been refused the right to return to their land in spite of the UN resolution 194. The practice of land grabbing has never stopped⁴;

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The prolonged occupation of Palestinian territory since 1967 which involves the refusal of basic political, civil, social and cultural rights of Palestinians subject to Israeli military control.

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Zionism has furthered Israel's aggressive policy of war and destruction, entailing serious violations of international humanitarian law.

We are calling on the Basel government, the Grand Council and the Swiss government to begin with a critical assessment of Zionism in its real implications for the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people and for international human rights legislation as a whole. It is time that Basel and Switzerland stop positive reference to the Zionist congresses held in Basel more than 100 years ago and the friendly relationship with Israel based on these events.

¹ See for instance bit.ly/2rrqeC2 or bit.ly/2sXxUrZ

² See bit.ly/2slfXDv or bit.ly/2rTwbgP

³ See bit.ly/2sa3Mdu

⁴ See for instance bit.ly/2rI35cY and bit.ly/2rj5BER

Signing organisations:

BDS Switzerland

Gesellschaft Schweiz Palästina

Partei der Arbeit der Schweiz (PdAS)

Alternative Linke Bern

Kommunistische Jugend Schweiz

Bewegung für Sozialismus Basel (BFS)

Palästina-Solidarität Region Basel

OPSEF

Basler Frauenvereinigung für Frieden und Fortschritt (BFFF)

Gerechtigkeit und Frieden in Palästina Bern

BDS Zürich

Collectif Urgence Palestine Vaud

European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine (ECCP)

Association France Palestine Solidarité (AFPS) (France)

Union Juive Française pour la Paix (UJFP) (France)

Collectif Judéo Arabe et Citoyen pour la Palestine (France)

Jewish Voice of Peace (Germany)

Palästinakomitee Stuttgart e.V. (Germany)

BDS Berlin (Germany)

Deutsch-palästinensische Gesellschaft e.V. (DPG)

Frauen in Schwarz (Wien, Austria)

Association Belgo-Palestinienne (Belgium)

Stichting Diensten en Onderzoek Centrum Palestina (DocP, Netherlands)

Comité pour une Paix Juste au Proche-Orient Luxembourg

British Committee for the Universities of Palestine (BRICUP)

Jews for Boycotting Israeli Goods (J-BIG)

Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC, Ireland)

Gibanje za pravice Palestincev, BDS Slovenija

Izquierda Unida (Spain)

Paz Ahora/Peace Now (Spain)