

Actress Natalie Portman Boycotts Israeli Award Ceremony

By [Stephen Lendman](#)
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Many more like her are needed – prominent individuals and others unwilling to support a nation responsible for decades of unaccountable high crimes against Palestinians, along with waging wars on neighboring states.

Dual US/Israeli citizen, award-winning actress, animal and environmental rights activist Portman declined to participate in a Jerusalem Genesis Prize Foundation ceremony.

It's awarded "to individuals who have achieved international recognition in their professional field, the worlds of science and the arts."

It's for "exceptional people whose values and achievements will inspire the next generations of Jews."

"The objective of the Genesis Prize is to emphasize across the Jewish community and the world at large the importance of Jewish values to the fulfillment of human potential and to the betterment of the world."

Portman's representative told Genesis that

"(r)ecent events in Israel have been extremely distressing to her, and she does not feel comfortable participating in any public events in Israel," adding:

"(S)he cannot in good conscience move forward with the ceremony" – strong comments referring to dozens of defenseless Gazans killed, thousands more injured since Good Friday Great March of Return protests began.

Portman issued the following statement, saying

"I chose not to attend (the awards ceremony) because I did not want to appear as endorsing Benjamin Netanyahu," adding:

"I am not part of the BDS movement...Like many Israelis and Jews around the

world, I can be critical of the leadership in Israel without wanting to boycott the entire nation.”

“But the mistreatment of those suffering from today’s atrocities is simply not in line with my Jewish values. Because I care about Israel (her birthplace), I must stand up against violence, corruption, inequality, and abuse of power.”

In response to her decision not to attend, Genesis cancelled its June 28 awards ceremony. Portman received \$2 million from the foundation.

She’ll keep her award money, intending to donate to organizations involved with women’s rights, especially focused on Israel.

In announcing its award, Genesis said the following:

“Natalie’s charismatic on-screen presence has touched the hearts of millions.”

“Her talent, her commitment to social causes and her deep connection to her Jewish and Israeli roots are greatly admired.”

“She exemplifies the core traits of the Jewish character and values of the Jewish people – persistence and hard work, pursuit of excellence, intellectual curiosity, and a heartfelt desire to contribute to making the world a better place.”

“Without a doubt, she is a role model for millions of young Jews around the world.”

Portman’s decision was courageous, risking damage to her career. Criticism came quickly.

Israel’s Minister of Culture Miri Regev accused her of “f(alling) into the hands of BDS supporters,” adding:

“Portman, a Jewish actress born in Israel, joins those who tell the successful, wondrous founding of the State of Israel as ‘a tale of darkness and darkness.’ “

Likudnik lawmaker suspended from the Knesset for six months for stalking, sexual harassment, sexist and chauvinist statements, along with other offensive remarks against MKs Oren Hazan called for “revok(ing) her Israeli citizenship,” saying she’s “a tool for the haters of Israel.”

In response to her decision, a Genesis statement said:

“Ms. Portman is a highly accomplished actress, a committed social activist and a wonderful human being.”

“The staff of the foundation enjoyed getting to know her over the past six months, admires her humanity, and respects her right to publicly disagree with the policies of the government of Israel.”

“However, we are very saddened that she has decided not to attend the Genesis Prize ceremony in Jerusalem for political reasons.”

“We fear that Ms. Portman’s decision will cause our philanthropic initiative to be politicized, something we have worked hard...to avoid.”

Portman has been largely apolitical – though in 2015, she criticized Netanyahu’s “racist comments,” calling them “horrific,” saying she was “very upset and disappointed that he was reelected.”

Kulanu party MK Rachel Azaria said her awards ceremony boycott constitutes a “warning light” to Israel, adding:

“She’s speaking for many in US Jewry, especially the young generation. Losing them may be too high a price.”

Her unwillingness to participate in an event associated with a racist rogue state hopefully inspires many other Jews and non-Jews to criticize its ruthlessness.

Along with BDS activism, it’s perhaps the only way for Palestinians one day to be free on their own land, in their own country, liberated from oppressive occupation harshness.

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My newest book as editor and contributor is titled “Flashpoint in Ukraine: How the US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III.”

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