

Laughing at Gaza's Destruction!

An Open Letter to Comedienne Anne Roumanoff

By [Global Research](#)

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Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) 22
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We know that your stand-up comedy brings laughter and joy to many French-speaking people around the world. As such we are shocked and disappointed to learn that you are going to perform in Geneva on March 2nd, 2009 in support of handicapped Israeli veterans.

Your performance in this show would constitute an act of support and solidarity with the Israeli army, which is Israel's main instrument for the systematic oppression and brutal subjugation of the Palestinian people. It would contribute towards 'polishing' the international image of an aggressive military force that has a long history of involvement in massacres and the documented ethnic cleansing of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their land.

We hope you agree that this is the opposite of everything that comedy should represent. There is nothing funny about the Israeli army's human rights record. There should be no place for comedy or comedians working to whitewash its crimes abroad while Palestinians still suffer from Israel's vicious military aggression and criminal siege. As we write, Israel continues to build settlements and an apartheid infrastructure of roads, blockades and the Wall, declared illegal by the International Court of Justice. Israel denies millions of Palestinian refugees their internationally recognized right to return to their lands; it is destroying Palestinian homes; killing Palestinian children with impunity; and uprooting hundreds of thousands of Palestinian trees. Moreover, Israel maintains a system of racial discrimination against its own Palestinian citizens reminiscent of South African apartheid. Your performance in support of the Israeli army will be telling the Palestinians that their suffering - the product of colonialism and racism - doesn't matter. You will be giving a slap in the face to Palestinian comedians, musicians, artists, filmmakers, writers and poets, who keep hope alive in circumstances meant to suffocate and crush them.

We are therefore writing to ask you to reconsider your decision to perform for the benefit of the Israeli army. We wonder how anyone could stand on a stage and make the audience laugh in support of veterans of an army that has just ended its atrocious assault on the occupied Gaza Strip. No doubt you are aware that this Israeli war of aggression killed more than 1,300 people, of whom 410 were children, in addition to injuring another 5,300 people. It was preceded by an 18 month siege described by the UN Special Rapporteur for Human

Rights in the occupied Palestinian territory as a “prelude to genocide”. The war on occupied Gaza conducted by the Israeli army further resulted in the annihilation of entire extended families; the destruction of neighbourhoods, villages, schools and UN buildings. The Israeli army also used white phosphorus munitions and other controversial weapons in one of the most densely populated areas on earth, where more than half the population are children. The UN Human Rights Council, Amnesty International and many leading international jurists have also called for investigations into possible war crimes by the very forces you would be acting to support.

As you may know, virtually all Palestinian filmmakers, artists and cultural figures have called on their colleagues worldwide to boycott Israeli cultural and arts institutions due to their complicity in perpetuating Israel’s occupation and other forms of oppression against the Palestinian people [1]. In response, in the past few weeks, throughout the world, groups of artists, comedians, filmmakers, students and academics, have consolidated their efforts to show solidarity with the occupied Palestinians, to condemn Israel’s war crimes and its apartheid regime, and to call for effective political action such as boycotts, divestment drives, and sanctions (BDS). The latest have been many eminent French academics who recently issued a statement in support of punitive measures by the international community to make Israel accountable for its war crimes [2].

We hope you will be amongst the international artists, including Bono, Snoop Dogg, Bjork and Jean-Luc Godard, who have heeded calls to boycott Israel and its cultural activities until it fulfils its obligations under international law and fully recognizes Palestinian rights.

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[1] http://www.pacbi.org/campaign_statement.htm

[2] <http://schlomoh.blog.lemonde.fr/>

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