

# Paul McCartney meets Barack Obama: Why did McCartney not take a Stand on a Matter of Gross Injustice and Human Suffering

By [Finian Cunningham](#)

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Last night, former Beatle Paul McCartney, or to give him his stupid official title, Sir Paul McCartney, was presented with the Gershwin Prize by US president Barack Obama at a concert held in the White House during which a host of other artists performed songs written by McCartney (and the late John Lennon, although the latter wasn't acknowledged).

McCartney should be ashamed of himself for accepting this Library of Congress prize for popular songwriting in the way that he did. For a start, he is taking sole credit for songs that he wrote as part of an artistic team: Lennon/McCartney. Even if McCartney wrote more of this or that song as a member of the iconic sixties' group, it doesn't alter the fact that the music was created as part of an artistic process involving teamwork. Simply put, McCartney would not be who he is without the artistic collaboration of John Lennon and the late George Harrison and Ringo Starr. The prize handed to him should have borne the names of the others.

More importantly, McCartney should be ashamed of himself for attending an event that affords any dignity and legitimacy to this White House, Obama and all those other war criminals in his administration. At an earlier press conference, McCartney described Obama as a "great guy". This fawning over the US commander in chief is all the more glaring in the week (31 May) that witnessed the massacre of civilians by Israeli forces on an aid convoy trying to make its way to help 1.5 million Palestinians who are living in the urban concentration known as Gaza.

The US government has refused to condemn this crime against humanity, both the massacre at sea and the continuing three-year siege of extermination on Gaza by Israeli forces. Indeed, Obama and his senior aides have gone out of their way to shield Israel from the anger that has erupted across the world over the killing of nine humanitarians and the wounding of dozens more by Israeli commandos.

These quotes from writer Bill Van Auken at the World Socialist Web Site on the gravity of where the US government and its lawless client regime in Tel Aviv is dragging the world say it all:

"The unconditional support and approximately \$3 billion in annual aid to Israel bestowed by Washington—and continued under Obama—pose a mortal danger to people across the globe. This is not a matter merely of a single outlaw regime, but of a general descent of world affairs into a state of criminality and

the disintegration of any semblance of international law, with Israel's main patron setting the pattern.

"The Obama administration continues two wars of aggression initiated under Bush and has maintained intact a police state apparatus of unlawful detentions, rendition and torture. It has now earned the ignominious designation as the number one practitioner of "targeted killings"—assassinations—through CIA drone attacks that have killed "many hundreds of people" in Pakistan, according to a United Nations report... The report condemned Washington for claiming a 'license to kill without accountability'.

"The behavior of the US and... acts of state terrorism and piracy like that committed by Israel this week, and the constant threats of new aggression have created a global climate that bears ever closer resemblance to the conditions that prevailed on the eve the Second World War." [1]

McCartney may pretend that music, like sport, is somehow outside politics. But what good is an artist if he or she does not reflect the world around them? Furthermore, accepting accolades and baubles from political leaders and heads of states is a highly political act. In that simple act of deference, McCartney is affording respect and dignifying people and their system of government that is otherwise reprehensible by common legal and moral standards. As an artist and public figure admired and known by millions of people around the world, there is an obligation on McCartney to take a stand on a matter of gross injustice and human suffering.

The irony is that his co-writer and the much more politically conscious John Lennon, who in his later solo career wrote classic anti-war songs such as Give Peace a Chance and Working Class Hero and who refused to accept an honorary title from the British Empire, was omitted from acknowledgements in the Gershwin Prize. For Lennon would probably have snubbed it and the junta that occupies the White House with suitable derision anyway.

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## Notes

[1] <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2010/jun2010/pers-j03.shtml>.

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Finian Cunningham has written extensively on international affairs, with articles published in several languages. Many of his recent articles appear on the renowned Canadian-based news website Globalresearch.ca. He is a Master's graduate in Agricultural Chemistry and worked as a scientific editor for the Royal Society of Chemistry, Cambridge, England, before pursuing a career in journalism. He specialises in Middle East and East Africa issues and has also given several American radio interviews as well as TV interviews on Press TV and Russia Today. Previously, he was based in Bahrain and witnessed the political upheavals in the Persian Gulf kingdom during 2011 as well as the subsequent Saudi-led brutal crackdown against pro-democracy protests.

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