

## **Press Release: Bazar International de Luxembourg 2024 – Double Standards and Conflicting Values**

Collectives for Palestine calls on the Bazar International de Luxembourg to acknowledge its lack of political neutrality, to stop Israel's promotion of illegal activities, to treat all visitors equally with dignity and respect and re-focus on promoting humanitarian values.

For 64 years, the Bazar International de Luxembourg has stood as a symbol of inclusiveness, diversity, and humanitarian solidarity, raising funds for the less fortunate through a global showcase of products. However, this year's event raises serious concerns about the Bazar's commitment to its values of cultural coexistence, dignity, and justice.

### **A Platform for Injustice**

The inclusion of an Israeli stand at the 2024 Bazar International de Luxembourg is deeply concerning, given Israel's documented violations of international law, including allegations of war crimes and genocide in Palestine, Lebanon, and beyond. Despite the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) warning of a potential genocide in Gaza, the Bazar organizers have chosen to disregard these grave concerns. Additionally, security measures at this year's Bazar were unprecedented, reaching levels unseen since the 1960s, resulting in long queues, with the explanation given of securing the Israeli stand.

Meanwhile, the absence of a Palestinian stand exposes a stark double standard that undermines the Bazar's claim of political neutrality. Requests for a Palestinian stand were largely ignored or met with vague responses, discouraging the completion of the application process. When questioned during the event, organizers cited a policy allowing only two new stands per year, noting that Brazil had waited seven years for inclusion. This reasoning was not shared ever during the email exchanges. Therefore, this reasoning lacks transparency and fails to account for the apparent neglect of Palestine's application.

### **Products from Occupation and Propaganda**

The Israeli stand featured products from illegal settlements, including Dead Sea goods and Golan Heights wine, despite international condemnation of these settlements. Additionally, maps displayed at the stand annexed the Golan Heights and the West Bank, directly contravening international law. Just a few months ago, in September 2024, the UN General Assembly has reaffirmed that "the Israeli settlements...in the occupied Syrian Golan are illegal" and called on Israel to "immediately cease and reverse all settlement development and related activities in the occupied Syrian Golan and end discriminatory land, housing and development policies, in compliance with relevant United Nations resolutions."

This year, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) affirmed Israel should stop settlement activity in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem and end its "illegal" occupation of those areas and the Gaza Strip as soon as possible. "The Israeli military occupation has prevented the realisation of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, violating each component of that right and wilfully pursuing the 'de-Palestinianisation' of the occupied territory," said Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory in 2022. The annexation of the West Bank manifests Israel's policies of domination through the "strategic fragmentation" of the occupied territory and is a blatant dismissal of the two-state solution, which is supported by the EU, the US and most other countries and seen by some as the only way to bring peace to the area.

Thus, the distribution of such a map is highly political and with regards to human rights very concerning. Visitors raised these issues with the organizers on the first day of the Bazar, but no action was taken.

### **Targeting of Palestinian Activists**

Outside the event, a group of Palestinian activists peacefully distributed flyers, held banners, and engaged with interested visitors. Over the three days of the Bazar, no complaints of violence were reported against this group. However, one activist, who entered the venue was physically aggressed by a pro-Israeli visitor attempting to remove her "Free Palestine" sticker from her sweater.

### **Discrimination Against Palestinian Supporters**

Visitors wearing keffiyehs —a symbol of Palestinian culture— (or anything that can symbolize support towards Palestine) faced unjust scrutiny and discrimination on several occasions. On the first day of the Bazar, a group of people wearing the keffiyeh were denied entry outright. On the second day, some were allowed in but only under the condition of being escorted by security and refraining from "provocation." The keffiyeh was treated as a threat, while the Israeli stand openly displayed "Stand with Israel" slogans. In contrast, a visitor with a "Free Palestine" sticker was barred from entry entirely.

### **A Call for Accountability**

The Bazar's mission to promote humanitarian values is fundamentally at odds with its decision to normalize Israel's actions. Israel's participation not only undermines the event's credibility but also alienates human rights advocates and contradicts the Bazar's commitment to justice and unity.

### **About 'Collectives for Palestine'**

'Collectives for Palestine' is a group of organisations united by a shared commitment to defend the Palestinian's right to self-determination and working together for peace, equality, and justice and against racism, occupation, and colonisation.

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