



## Press Release

### Campaign to suspend Israel from international sports attracts over 33,000 supporters

A [petition](#) by pan-European movement DiEM25 demanding the immediate suspension of Israel from all international sports has gathered over 33,000 signatures within a week. The campaign demands that global and European sports governing bodies immediately uphold their statutory obligations and their own rules on human rights and non-discrimination, given Russian, South African and other precedents. This would include, inter alia, a ban on Israel competing at the 2024 Paris Olympics, UEFA's European Championship and FIFA's World Cup.

The petition follows the model that helped bring an end to apartheid in South Africa. That struggle took on all possible dimensions, with one of the earliest being suspension of sporting ties—which aided in peacefully isolating the South African regime, demonstrated a global rejection of apartheid and changed domestic perspectives in the country.

This act must now be extended to Israel—not only due to its practice of settler-colonialism, military occupation, ethnic cleansing, genocide, apartheid and illegal exploitation of natural resources on occupied territories—but also due to its brutal assault on cultural, academic and sporting life of the Palestinian society.

Quote by **Dr. Kat Pijetlovic**, an expert on international and European sports law, and an author of the full letter linked to the DiEM25 petition that she co-organised:

"The Israeli offensive on Gaza and the decades of apartheid, occupation, and Palestinian suffering prior to it, has been ignored by the sports governing bodies. The International Olympic Committee, FIFA, UEFA and FIBA, have been completely silent on the issue, yet they published their statements of condemnation the same day when Russia invaded Ukraine and suspended Russia only four days later. This sends a clear message that the lives of Palestinian athletes and the development of Palestinian sports do not matter to them at all, and neither do their own statutory obligations on non-discrimination and human rights. This is why we must organise and put pressure on them – the head-in-the-sand approach is no longer acceptable and organising global boycotts by multiple organisations is likely to follow if they fail to suspend Israel."

**Quote by Yanis Varoufakis**, co-founder of DiEM25:

"A key sanction that helped demoralise the racists in charge of Apartheid South Africa, and brought down their Apartheid regime, was the exclusion of South African teams and athletes from all international sporting facilities for as long as the blacks had no rights and faced a different set of punitive legislation than the dominant ethnic group. The same must apply to



Israel. Israeli supremacists think it is OK for Palestinians to have no rights and to be subject to punitive administrative and legal rules in Israel-proper and in the occupied territories. They think that they can circulate within the world community, and participate in sporting events, as if Apartheid at home is fine and the world does not care. It is imperative that the international community demonstrates to them that, no, Apartheid is not fine. It is high time Israel is banned from all international sporting events until Israel ends its Apartheid regime, just like white supremacist South Africa was.”

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** For a deeper analysis on the rationale to suspend Israel from international sports, please review [this paper](#) (also available [in Spanish](#)) that will be sent to sports organisations.

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