

## To the members of the **Cambridge University Chamber Choir**

6 February 2012

We urge you to **cancel** your concert tour of Israel with the Israel Camerata and the Academy of English Voices from 20-27 March 2012 – as announced on your website as accessed today. Our peaceful path to justice for the Palestinians, who are dispossessed and oppressed by the Israeli state, is that of full material and cultural **boycott** of Israel. We believe Israel can be brought to respect human rights only when all sectors of Israeli society, including artists and academics, feel international pressure. Such a boycott of the South African regime was successful.

The Israeli state systematically denies justice and human rights to approximately half the people living within the areas it controls. An abbreviated list of grievances includes the blockade of Gaza, Operation Cast Lead, occupation of and daily humiliation within the occupied territories, discrimination against ethnic groups within Israel, and the Apartheid Wall within the occupied West Bank. House demolitions, land confiscation, destruction of fruit and olive trees, mass imprisonment, killings, assassinations, racist settlement laws, movement restriction, curfews, child prisoners, and ethnic cleansing have now been perpetrated *for 64 years*.

Approximate, reliable numbers for 2011: The state of Israel killed about 180 Palestinians, including 21 children; detained 3,300 Palestinians; approved the construction of 266,837 settlement units, including 1,664 in Occupied Jerusalem; confiscated almost 4,000 acres of Palestinian land; demolished 495 houses and 18,764 olive and fruit trees. We see protest as a moral obligation.

The Israeli Camerata receives funding from the state of Israel; Israel itself uses the arts politically to enhance its image; Palestinians will not be able to attend your concerts; in autumn 2011 Israel tried to block Palestine's joining the United Nations Educational, Scientific and *Cultural* Organisation, UNESCO. In our view politics and the arts are thus already mixed, and as in the fight against South African Apartheid, artistic non-participation does not contradict any of the beauty, indeed purity, of art itself.

Since 2005, 171 Palestinian civil society organisations are calling for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel. Visit the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel at <http://www.pacbi.org/> , the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine at <http://www.bricup.org.uk/> and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement <http://www.bdsmovement.net/>. Touring Israel as you plan is tantamount to crossing this picket line, and you are urged to join people boycotting Israel such as John Eliot Gardner, Eduardo Galeano, Arundhati Roy, Reem Kelani, John Berger, Victoria Brittain, Elvis Costello, Denise Jannah, Pete Seeger, Ken Loach and many, many others.

We welcome dialogue with you in this matter, and hope you get in touch.

*Yours sincerely in the name of the Cambridge Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Cambridge University Palestine Society,*

Averil Parkinson, Chair, Cambridge Palestine Solidarity Campaign

[http://www.campalsoc.org/?page\\_id=41](http://www.campalsoc.org/?page_id=41)

Ghadir Siyam, President, Cambridge University Palestine Society - on Facebook, through [palestine@cusu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:palestine@cusu.cam.ac.uk) or, for earlier events, see <http://cu-palestinesociety.blogspot.com>

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Methods of 'interrogating' jailed Palestinian children have been documented as of 22 January by the *Guardian*:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/22/palestinian-children-detained-jail-israel?INTCMP=SRCH>

Further documentation: Palestine Solidarity Campaign UK

<http://www.palestinecampaign.org/> and the Electronic Intifada

<http://electronicintifada.net/>

If you do decide to grace Israel with your music, please keep your eyes and ears open for:

<http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/> <http://www.cpt.org/work/palestine>

<http://www.btselem.org/>

<http://boycottisrael.info/>

<http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/magazine/crying-out-loud-1.325558>