

London, 28 November 2012

Dear Stevie Wonder:

We're in a state of shock. Can the Stevie Wonder who's about to play a benefit performance for the Israel Defence Force be the same Stevie Wonder who got himself arrested protesting apartheid in South Africa? We're looking at a newspaper report from 15 February 1985, with Stevie Wonder in police custody saying 'I will become a conscientious criminal for world justice and against oppression, segregation and apartheid'. Can this be you?

We're puzzled because we can't understand how someone who was so active in the campaign against apartheid South Africa can think there's no problem playing a benefit for the Friends of the Israel Defence Force.

When you sit down at the piano at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza in Los Angeles on December 6, will you be able to put out of your mind baby Omar Mashhrawi, blasted to death on the first day of the Israeli army's recent onslaught against the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip? His story, and that of his father, recounted [here](#) by the BBC, are very touching.

When Omar was born, racism and discrimination against Palestinians were already major factors in his life, since the entire Gaza Strip has been under siege, blockade and bombardment by the Israeli army for the past five years. And, like most people in Gaza, Omar was born a refugee, his grandparents driven out of the Palestinian towns and villages that became Israel in 1948. Driven out by whom? By the army you're helping to raise money for.

How can you do it, Stevie Wonder? The same people you supported in South Africa are now calling for boycott action against what they are clear is an apartheid regime against the Palestinians. Archbishop-emeritus Desmond Tutu [says](#), 'I have

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visited the Occupied Palestinian territories, and have witnessed the humiliation of Palestinians at Israeli military checkpoints...the inhumanity that won't let ambulances reach the injured, or children attend school. This treatment is familiar to me and the many black South Africans who were corralled by the security forces of the apartheid government.' In May, Tutu [told](#) a US newspaper, 'The harsh reality endured by millions of Palestinians requires people of conscience to divest.'

Stevie Wonder, we're asking you to divest yourself of your commitment to play this benefit, which is described by its organiser as an 'opportunity to thank the soldiers who defend the State'. If you go, you'll be helping to celebrate a state based on the subjugation and dispossession of the Palestinians. Please, think again. Please don't play.

Yours sincerely,  
Professor Haim Bresheeth  
Mike Cushman  
Professor Adah Kay  
Professor Jonathan Rosenhead