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By Michel Arria

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Puma ends its sponsorship of Israel's national football team

Victory of the Boycott Campaign against Israel



Sources: Mondoweiss / Image: Tahir Hasmi/FLICKR

Translated for Rebellion by Paco Muñoz de Bustillo

It has been announced that Puma will not renew its contract with the Israel Football Association (IFA) in 2024. The news was first reported by the Financial Times, which obtained internal documents relating to the sponsorship deal.

Puma has been targeted by the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign since the contract was signed in 2018. The Palestinian-led campaign aims to hold Israel to its obligations under international law. The IFA has multiple teams based in illegal West Bank settlements.

"After years of BDS campaigning that has cost dearly in reputation and projects to the German conglomerate Puma, we have forced it to abandon its sponsorship of the Israel Football Association in these times of the #GazaGenocidio of Israel," tweeted the Palestinian Boycott Campaign Academic and Cultural Institutions for Israel (PACBI).

"The Palestinians are currently facing a unprecedented violence at the hands of the Israeli army. While the world is asking a permanent ceasefire, companies continue to profit from the slaughter and destruction," said the director of the Solidarity Campaign with Palestinian Rep. (PSC), Ben Jamal, in a statement. "We have to put an end to this complicity."

"PUMA's decision is an important victory that It demonstrates the power of the solidarity movement," he continued. "We have sent a powerful message to all corporations: if you choose to be complicit of Israeli apartheid, they will face the strength of the solidarity movement. We will continue to grow our Boycott, Divestment and Decline campaigns. Sanctions (BDS) against banks like Barclays and corporations like JCB, which are complicit in Israel's apartheid system."

Puma denies that this decision has anything to do with the campaign BDS and claims it was taken before the latest attack on Gaza. "The review of the existing list of national teams based on certain [indicators performance keys], such as ads and engagement on the top international tournaments, led to some changes," reads a statement from the company sent to *Time*.

However, as PACBI points out, the campaign has garnered a A series of victories against the company that have undoubtedly had an impact on his account results. In 2020, Malaysia's largest university abandoned its sponsorship with Puma, and British clubs have also come under pressure to act. Luton Town FC walked out of their deal that same year, and Rovers FC He pledged not to sign a contract with them.

Puma stores have also been subject to raising awareness among activists opposed to such sponsorship. In 2021, Lea Kayali, a Palestinian organizer from the Boston area, spoke

to *Mondoweiss* about the protests against a local Puma store. "The goal of any BDS campaign is to force people to confront their relationship with Zionism," he explained. "It's the same goal at the local level, the campaign is a vehicle to Do. It's not just about sneakers and T-shirts, it's about confronting the ties that we have as taxpayers in this country."

Hundreds of Palestinian teams and athletes have also called to the boycott. After Puma released a statement in support of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in 2020, Palestinian footballer Mahmoud Sarsak wondered how the company condemned racism while "supporting the hatred that is destroying lives and poisoning the beautiful game."

"We cannot be against a certain kind of racism," he wrote. "Either we oppose all the hatred and all the human rights violations, or we are part of the problem. Right now, Puma is part of the problem."

Source: <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/12/bds-victory-puma-to-end-its-sponsorship-of-israels-national-team/>

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