

Boston rejects Zionist pinkwashing

written by Struggle - La Lucha
June 22, 2023



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We are writing as queer, trans, Two Spirit, non-binary, Palestinian, Arab, Black, Indigenous, white, Latinx, and Jewish people living in the Boston area on occupied Massachusetts, Wampanoag, Nipmuc, and Wabanaki lands.

We were disappointed to learn that Boston Pride for the People chose to co-host a [Pride event](#) with the Israeli consulate and other Zionist organizations. This event, framed as a celebration of the experiences of queer Jewish community members, centers the experiences of queer Israeli settlers living on top of Palestinian villages stolen through violent expulsion and colonialism. This event is part of a broader strategy of recruiting support for the Israeli state by rebranding itself as queer-friendly in an effort to mask the Israeli state's ongoing violence against Palestinians—known as [“Brand Israel.”](#) The Brand Israel campaign intentionally markets Israel as a “gay-friendly” country and a gay tourism destination, a strategy that queer Palestinians and those in solidarity have termed [“Pinkwashing.”](#)

The Pinkwashing narrative that Israel is gay-friendly is not only harmful to Palestinians, it is also disingenuous and false. LGBTQ+ marriages are [not legal](#) in Israel. Egregiously, the Israeli military threatens and attempts to extort Palestinians based on private information about their gender, sexual history, and medical needs. This practice, which can include [threatening to “out” LGBTQ+ Palestinians](#), displays the violent character of Zionism that is antithetical to queer liberation. As [Al-Qaws](#), a queer Palestinian organization writes, “The open inclusion of gay officers in the Israeli occupation army is used as proof of liberal forward-mindedness, but for Palestinians the sexuality of the soldier at a checkpoint makes little difference. They all wield the same guns, wear the same boots, and maintain the same colonial regime.”

Despite being told why this event would be harmful, Boston Pride for the People still chose to co-sponsor this event with the Israeli Consulate. While professing to be progressive and inclusive of oppressed communities, BP4TP has chosen to exclude

Palestinian queers and their allies, including other Indigenous people, members of other communities of color, and anti-zionist Jews from the local LGBTQ+ community through their sponsorship of this event.

The harm behind this event is further illustrated by the actions of its cosponsors. For example, [Combined Jewish Philanthropies](#) actively funds Israeli settlement projects and has provided \$661,100 to the Boston Police Foundation. Wider Bridge, whose events have been [protested](#) across the country, explicitly aims to build support for the state of Israel among queer communities in the US.

This event, along with all pinkwashing and Brand Israel events, obfuscate the daily violence committed against Palestinians. This week, [nearly 100 Palestinians](#) were wounded and six were killed by Israeli forces invading Jenin. Just last week the Israeli state [raided](#) the Ein Beit Al-Mai refugee camp in the city of Nablus, demolishing a home, injuring six Palestinians, and killing twenty-year-old Palestinian Khalil Yahya Anis. At least [170 Palestinians](#) have been killed by Israeli forces since the start of this year, at least [21](#) of them Palestinian children.

As queer and trans people and colonized people who are allies of the queer and trans struggle, we know that our history is a history of struggle and resistance. We are still resisting attacks on trans youth and violence against Black and Indigenous 2SLGBTQIA+. Our struggle is also against imperialism and colonialism. Upon their arrival to Turtle Island, European colonizers not only attempted to destroy Indigenous connections to the land; they [violently criminalized](#) Two-Spirit, non-cisnormative, non-heteronormative, non-nuclear, non-monogamous experiences, reframing these natural ways of being as “deviant.” Resisting transphobia and homophobia means resisting colonialism, solidarity with Indigenous peoples, and rejecting these ideas that have been forced on us.

As Marsha P. Johnson said, there can be, “No Pride For Some of Us Without Liberation For All of Us.” We cannot claim to support queer and trans liberation

while passively or actively supporting Israeli violence and colonialism.

SUPPORTERS OF THIS LETTER LISTED BELOW

Organizations supporting this letter:

Adalah Justice Project
Al-Awda New York
Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine
Boston Revolutionary Socialists
Brown Students for Justice in Palestine
Catalyst Project
Communist Workers League
Falastiniyat
Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice
Jewish Voice for Peace Boston
Jewish Voice for Peace Ohio
Malaya Movement Massachusetts
Massachusetts Bail Fund
Massachusetts Trans Political Coalition
MIT Coalition Against Apartheid
Muslims for Just Futures
North American Indian Center of Boston
Palestinian Feminist Collective
Palestinian Youth Movement Boston
Socialist Unity Party
Stonewall Liberation Organization
Students United for Palestinian Equality & Return at University of Washington
Tufts Students for Justice in Palestine
United American Indians of New England
US Campaign for Palestinian Rights

Wellesley Students for Justice in Palestine
Women In Struggle-Mujeres En Lucha
Workers World Party Boston

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Chase Spearance
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Sara Amin
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Evalynn Davis
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Ava Ladd

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Susan K. Jacoby

[Add your name](#)

