

Halifax calls out: No tennis for genocide!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Mouna Manna, one of the protesters inside the city council chambers, holds up a

sign opposing Halifax's plan to host the Davis Cup, Aug. 19. Photo: Suzanne Rent

Hundreds turned out in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, on Aug. 19 to stop the allocation of public funds to support the Canada-Israel Davis Cup slated in that city on Sept. 12 and 13. Mobilized by the Halifax Committee against Imperialist War & Genocide, they demanded that Halifax must not be complicit in genocide by hosting this event. Halifax is the capital and largest municipality of Canada's Nova Scotia province, with a population of just over half a million people on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

Just after 8 p.m., however, without any public debate, without transparency, and without even the decency of discussion, in a 10 to 6 vote, the City Council approved the Special Events Advisory Committee's \$50,000 CAD funding for the Davis Cup tennis match. A vote not for tennis, but to normalize genocide

Organizers reported that hundreds gathered at 9:30 am on that workday to confront the Halifax City Council, demanding the cancellation of the event to send an unequivocal message: Halifax will not stand on the wrong side of history. Unwilling to face the public outcry against hosting a sports team of a country admittedly conducting genocide and starvation of Palestinians that was shown in an email campaign, and the chamber overflowing with concerned Canadians, the agenda was juggled to postpone the vote into the night.

The Halifax Committee argues:

"The proposed match ... is not a neutral sporting event. It is a deliberate political act — a gift of legitimacy, a propaganda stage, and a public relations shield for a state that is committing a genocide in Gaza. At a time when tens of thousands of Palestinians have been killed, maimed, starved, or displaced; when homes, schools, hospitals, and vital infrastructure have been obliterated; when overwhelming evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity is documented daily — for

Halifax to fund and host this event is to be complicit in sports washing those atrocities.

“The State of Israel’s genocide and war crimes against the Palestinian people are so blatant, flagrant, heinous and undeniable that even its most fervent supporters can no longer bear them and remain silent. Former Canadian Minister of Justice Irwin Cotler — long a staunch advocate for Israel — has publicly called for an end to the war and starvation in Gaza, even denouncing the Israeli government’s rhetoric as ‘a moral abomination.’ If people of Cotler’s ilk cannot ignore the scale of Israel’s brutality, how can the City of Halifax turn a blind eye and instead reward it with public funds and civic celebration?!

“This is not about tennis. This is about whether our city will stand on the side of justice or align itself with the normalization of apartheid, occupation, and genocide. Across Canada and around the world, athletes, human rights defenders, and ordinary citizens have made it clear in their millions and billions: there can be no normal sporting relations with an apartheid state engaged in mass slaughter.”

The Halifax Committee addressed the fig leaf of promoting tourism, charging: “It is a deliberate political act—designed to grant legitimacy, offer a PR platform, and whitewash the crimes of a state currently engaged in a genocidal campaign in Gaza. This is sportswashing, not sport. And in this case, it is soaked in blood.

“To prioritize potential tourism revenue over basic human rights is to place a dollar value on human life. The Halifax Regional Council has chosen to trade morality for money, as though economic gain could ever justify complicity in atrocity. This is a betrayal—not just of international law, but of the conscience of our community.”

Their statement concluded: “Let it be clear: We see you. We remember. And we resist.”

For more information, contact the Halifax Committee against Imperialist War & Genocide, hcaiwag@gmail.com

