

Pharrell Williams Woolworths Protests to Continue Despite City of Cape Town Objections

05 August 2015

The human rights and Palestine solidarity organization BDS South Africa is confident that planned protests outside upcoming Pharrell Williams Woolworths concerts, including the one in Cape Town, will take place as planned. Pharrell Williams has signed a deal with the local retailer Woolworths which has trade links with Israel and Williams is also set to perform in Tel-Aviv on the 9 September ([click here](#)), this is in violation of the Palestinian BDS boycott call.

The City of Cape Town yesterday morning rejected a protest application for the Western Cape protest of Pharrell Williams however organizers are intending to fight the rejection and continue with the planned protests.

It would seem that the City of Cape Town is acting against civil society in either the interest of the State of Israel (guilty of human rights violations) or the interest of Woolworths. Civil society space and protest is protected under our constitution and BDS South Africa intends to fight against the City's rejection of the Cape Town protest application to ensure that activities continue as planned. We also welcome the African National Congress (ANC) condemning of the City of Cape Town's rejection ([click here](#)).

According to reports, yesterday City of Cape Town representatives "behaved in a thuggish, aggressive and unprofessional manner" at a protest application meeting eventually collapsing the meeting and rejecting the protest permit. BDS South Africa will not allow civil society and human rights organizations to be intimidated and mistreated by the

City of Cape Town.

BDS South Africa will join several other organizations in participating in the protest activities outside Pharell William's concerts in September to express our disagreement with, firstly, Pharrell Williams choice to break the boycott of Israel and perform there on the 9th of September as well as his decision to partner with a company such as Woolworths which is arrogantly refusing to end its trade with the Apartheid State of Israel.

We will not be deterred, on Monday the 21st of September, thousands of peace and justice loving South Africans will gather outside Grand West Casino in Cape Town. We will also gather on the 24th of September at The Dome in Johannesburg to protest at the Gauteng leg of Pharell's Woolworths tour.

Pharell Williams is about to face the biggest backlash any artist has faced in South Africa since the end of apartheid. The freedom of this country came at a very high price, cultural boycotts were instrumental in raising awareness about the struggles of the oppressed people in South Africa during apartheid. International solidarity for us is a revolutionary duty not a PR stunt. Should Pharrell Williams choose to proceed with his Israeli concert and Woolworths collaboration he will be walking into a very unhappy environment.

BDS South Africa has previously written a letter to Pharrell Williams urging the artist delay his collaboration with Woolworths till it ends its Israeli trade. The artist is yet to respond. The letter was made public after a month of being delivered and can be found here:

www.bdssouthafrica.com/post/letter-to-pharrell-williams-17-june-2015/