

Soccer Politics: Palestinian Bid to Expel Israel from FIFA Dropped

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In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

At the 11th hour, Palestinian Football Association president Jibril Rajoub dropped a bid to expel Israel from FIFA shortly before it was to be voted on.

Israeli abuses against Palestinian footballers are longstanding – including harassment, travel restrictions, assaults, arrests and at times killings.

Competitive sports of any kind should refuse inclusion of rogue regimes like Israel guilty of every imaginable high crime – including racist abuse of Palestinian athletes for praying to the wrong God.

Instead of banishing Israel straightaway, FIFA proposed forming a committee to monitor whether Palestinian footballers have free movement, Israeli racism, and status of Israeli league teams based in illegal settlements.

Reelected FIFA president Sepp Blatter opposed ousting Israel. Instead of condemning its lawlessness, he absurdly said “(t)hose that have more will share with those who have less.”

“In this case, it is up to Israel to share a little bit more with Palestine.” Israel is a racist police state. It shares nothing. It’s all take and no give.

Rajoub takes orders from Abbas and other corrupt PA officials – longstanding Israeli collaborators, saying one thing publicly, doing another when it matters most.

Rajoub lied saying “Palestine has not withdrawn its application completely, but merely suspended it.”

When the chips were down, he folded. It didn’t surprise. Abbas notoriously betrays Palestinians for special benefits he derives. His rhetoric belies his policies.

Rajoub was unconvincing saying “(a) lot of colleagues, whom I respect and whose commitment to the ethics and values of the game I appreciate, told me how painful it is to hear of the issue of suspension.”

“But I want to protect the Palestinian footballers, to let them enjoy the privilege of the game as others do.”

“I think it’s time to raise the red card against racism and humiliation in Palestine and everywhere. It is time.”

Not when meaningless rhetoric substitutes for resoluteness – an attribute corrupt PA officials lack. Why they submitted an Israeli expulsion bid in the first place they'll have to explain – likely knowing they'd fold under pressure.

Two female protesters interrupted Blatter's Friday address shouting "Israel out." Security guards removed them.

Rajoub submitted Palestine's bid months earlier. He pretended to be firm all along.

Days earlier he said "(o)ur requests are clear, just and fair: Freedom of movement, end of racism and expulsion of all teams from illegal Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestine competing in the Israeli league."

Racist abuse of Palestinian footballers is longstanding Israeli policy. Archbishop Desmond Tutu once called it "shocking that (European football's governing body – UEFA) shows total insensitivity to the blatant and entrenched discrimination inflicted on Palestinian sportsmen and women by Israel."

Its abuse of Palestinian footballer Mahmoud Sarsak undermined a promising career. In 2009, Israeli security thugs arrested him for trying to cross from Gaza to the West Bank to participate in a match – his legitimate right.

He was horrifically abused, lawlessly kept in administrative detention for three years uncharged. His lawyers were denied access to fabricated evidence against him.

He was guilty of the crime of football – freed in summer 2012 after a 92 day hunger strike. Israel ruthlessly targets other Palestinian footballers like Sarsak.

Netanyahu commented on Friday's developments saying the outcome "proved our international efforts paid off and brought about the failure of the Palestinian Authority's attempt to expel us from FIFA..."

Israeli bullying and extreme pressure are notorious along with supportive likeminded tactics from Washington.

Palestinians stood little chance of getting Israel ousted or suspended. Occupation harshness persists. Abusing Palestinian footballers gives new meaning to the term "foul."

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