

OPEN LETTER TO ELTON JOHN

Dear Elton John:

Like much of the world, we think you're a good bloke. You came out when it was difficult; you admitted your addictions were stronger than you were; you've poured money into AIDS research. Oh, and then there's the music – not bad at all.

But we're struggling to understand why you're playing in Israel on June 17. You may say you're not a political person, but does an army dropping white phosphorus on a school building full of children demand a political response? Does walling a million and a half people up in a ghetto and then pounding that ghetto to rubble require a political response from us, or a human one?

We think it needs a human response, and we think that by choosing to play in Tel Aviv you're denying this. You're behaving as if playing in Israel is morally neutral – but how can it be? How can the cruelties Israel practises against the Palestinians – fundamentally because the Palestinians are there, on Palestinian land, and Israel wants them to go – be morally neutral?

Okay, you turn up in Ramat Gan, and it gets to that 'Candle in the Wind' moment, and thousands of lighters flicker – but there won't be any Palestinians from the Occupied Territories swaying along with the Israelis – the army won't let them leave their ghettos. Please read what Judge Goldstone said about the onslaught on Gaza; what Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have been saying for decades about the crimes committed against the Palestinians. Of course the Israeli state denies it has a case to answer, though it's knee-deep in ethnic cleansing and land-theft and the endless daily suffocating of Palestinian lives and hopes.

Political or not political, when you stand up on that stage in Tel Aviv, you line yourself up with a racist state. Do you want to give them the satisfaction? Please don't go.

Yours sincerely,
Professor Haim Bresheeth
Mike Cushman
Professor Steven Rose
Professor Jonathan Rosenhead

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