

We Refuse to Be Your Alibi!

Putting an End to the Colonial Legacy of the French Cultural Sector and Its Complacency Toward the State of Israel

A call by artists and intellectuals from the South belonging to or originating from South Africa, Algeria, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Ecuador, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, India, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Morocco, Mexico, Mozambique, Palestine, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Reunion, Syria, and Tunisia.

In support of the filmmakers, producers, and production professionals who have mobilized at FIDMarseille.

We, artists, researchers, and intellectuals from or originating from countries of the South, express our full support for the filmmakers and producers Hala Alabdalla, Asmit Amiralay, Fatma Cherif, Aude Fourel, Muhammed Hamdy, Aïda Kaadan, Farès Ladjimi, Narimane Mari, Monica Maurer, Nour Sabbagh, Ghassan Salhab, and Mohamed Soueid—who decided to withdraw their films from the Marseille International Film Festival (FID), scheduled for July 2026, as long as the festival maintains its decision to honor a filmmaker who is fully participating in normalization mechanisms with the State of Israel[1]. This act of political defiance should have opened up a space for collective reflection on cultural boycott, on the rejection of any normalization with the State of Israel, and, more broadly, on the responsibilities of the cultural community in regard to the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the struggle of the Palestinian people. Nothing of the sort happened. On the contrary, their political act sparked strong condemnation within the French cultural community and generated media coverage that was as exceptional as it was revealing [2]. The cultural community mobilized [3], not to denounce the annihilation of Gaza, the extermination of the Palestinian people, the invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon, the expansion of the occupation into Syria, or even France's complicity in the ongoing genocide. Nor to express outrage at the systematic destruction—in Gaza as well as in the West Bank—of universities, cultural centers, libraries, and venues of learning and knowledge. Nor to condemn the

censorship, arrest, imprisonment, torture, and assassination of Palestinian artists and intellectuals. Nor to express its alarm at the unprecedented repression in France targeting those who express solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. What has scandalized the cultural community, on the other hand, is precisely this act of refusal, which was immediately dismissed as a moral failing equated with censorship, a symptom of dogmatic and thoughtless thinking, an obstacle to freedom of expression, cowardice, or even primitive rage and violence.

We wish to recall that those who chose to withdraw their films did so in response to the call issued by 172 Palestinian civil society organizations. that, in 2005—drawing inspiration from international campaigns against South African apartheid—launched the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement. It was also this same civil society that defined the forms of its nonviolent resistance and called on civil society across the world to support it according to methods drawn from its historical experience of colonization, occupation, and the regime of oppression it faces. By withdrawing their films, the filmmakers invited to the FID heeded PACBI's [4] call for a cultural and academic boycott of Israel, thereby joining an international campaign whose principles are public and which is part of the history of anti-colonial struggles.

We have closely observed the nearly unanimous reaction of the French cultural and intellectual community. We have seen them sit in judgment, discredit the boycott as a form of struggle, deliver moral lecture, and decree which forms of resistance are legitimate and which are not—going so far as to speak on behalf of the Palestinians themselves to decide what would help or hinder their struggle.

The result is, as always, the same: to intimidate those who support the Palestinian struggle, to silence them, and in doing so, to delegitimize the call from Palestinian civil society. We are familiar with this paternalistic mechanism. We come from another part of the world. We belong to a different history—that of the colonized, of those subjected to racialization. We are among those for whom the Israeli genocide in Palestine is the historical continuation of a national project founded on colonialism, imperialism, and dispossession. We know in our very flesh what colonization, racism, humiliation, and white supremacy mean.

We know that in France, and elsewhere in the West, we are constantly being called upon to justify ourselves, that suspicion hangs over every word we speak, and that we must constantly surround our words with caveat, lest they be immediately dismissed. We know that symposia, festivals, conferences, and cultural venues open their doors to us only on the tacit condition that we accept the rules dictated by Western cultural authority. We know that our solidarity with Palestine is deemed acceptable only if it is tempered, framed, and subject to a requirement of symmetry, balance—or validated by an Israeli moral authority. When we refuse these conditions—as the filmmakers did at the FID—the retribution is immediate: we are disqualified, silenced, and excluded from the French and Western cultural, intellectual, and media spheres.

Yet we refuse to be reduced to the role of a token, an alibi, or an object of pity. We are political subjects in our own right. As such, it is up to us to decide under what conditions we speak out, showcase our work, or refuse to do so. It is our absolute right to withdraw our presence from a system that exploits our participation to ease its conscience rather than to question the responsibility and complicity of Western powers in the ongoing genocide. It is our right to challenge a framework incapable of reflecting on its own colonial legacy, and thereby force it to shift its perspective.

We remain hopeful that one day cultural institutions will stop demanding that artists leave their convictions at the entrance to festivals, museums, or performance venues. And that they will accept that culture is not a space removed from conflict, but a place where the conflicts of our time must be able to be named, confronted, and critically examined, without those who carry them being forced to renounce their political dignity.

Notes

[1] Filmmaker Nadav Lapid has screened his films at festivals supported by Israeli government ministries, competed in the Ophir Awards for Israeli cinema (whose winner automatically represents Israel at the Oscars), and participated on several occasions in the Israeli Film Festival in Paris—which is supported in particular by the Israeli Embassy and whose opening this year was marked by a speech from the Israeli ambassador to France.

[2] Approximately 180 media items in France were recorded in the first six days following the announcement of the withdrawal, of which only three quoted a few words spoken by the individuals who chose to withdraw their films.

[3] “Inviting an artist to a festival does not make them a cultural ambassador”: More than 350 prominent figures in support of Israeli filmmaker Nadav Lapid,” in Le Monde, June 8, 2026. https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2026/06/08/inviter-un-artiste-dans-un-festival-n-est-pas-l-eriger-en-ambassadeur-culturel-plus-de-350-personnalites-en-soutien-au-cineaste-israelien-nadav-lapid_6699625_3232.html

[4] The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) is a campaign that targets Israeli cultural institutions and forms of complicity, sponsorship, funding, or representation involving those institutions—not artists as individuals on the basis of their nationality, origin, or opinions : <https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi>

FIRST SIGNATORIES

Laila Abbas - Filmmaker, **Rashid Abdelhamid** - DJ, **Youssef Abdelké** - Artist, **Maya Abdul-Malak** - Filmmaker, **Noor Abed** - Artist, Filmmaker, **Maher Abi Samra** - Filmmaker, **Hany Abu-Assad** - Filmmaker, **Gilbert Achcar** - Scholar, **Yadad Adas** - Researcher, **Sadia Agsous Bienstein** - Scholar, **Sumaya Al-Attia** – Actress, **Saleem Albeik** – Critic, Writer, **Meyar Al Roumi** - Filmmaker, **Tamara Al Saadi** - Actress, Director, **Lyna Al Tabal** - Researcher, **Doha Al-Kahlout** - Poet, **Maram Al-Masri** - Poet, **Abdul-Rahim Al-Shaikh** - Researcher, Poet, **Ali Hussein Aladawy** - Curator, Film Critic, Researcher, **Kamal Aljafari** - Filmmaker, **Samaher Alqadi** - Filmmaker, **Basma Alsharif** - Artist, Filmmaker, **Enrique Álvarez** - Filmmaker, **Nourredine Amara** - Historian, **Muhammad Amine** - Film programmer, **Shaina Anand** - Artist, **Rana Anani** - Art Critic, **Raed Andoni** - Filmmaker, **Parastoo Anoushapour** - Filmmaker (FID), **Faraz Anoushapour** - Filmmaker (FID), **Marwa Arsanios** - Filmmaker, **Mohammad Ali Atassi** – Filmmaker, **Atef** - Artist, **Lina Attalah** - Journalist, **Ruba Atyeh** - Filmmaker, **Alia Ayman** - Film programmer, **Ariella Aïcha Azoulay** - Scholar, Filmmaker, **Louisa Babari** - Artist, **Salah Badis** - Writer, **Ismail Bahri** - Artist, **Ziad Bakri** - Actor, **Saleh Bakri** - Actor, **Qutaiba Barhamji** - Filmmaker, Editor, **Taysir Batniji** - Artist, **Nouria Behloul** - Filmmaker (FID), **Sonia Ben Slama** - Filmmaker, **Adila Bendimerad** - Actress, Filmmaker, **Advik Beni** - Filmmaker (FID), **Selim Bentounes** - Film programmer, Filmmaker, **Omar Berrada** - Writer, Curator, **Halida Boughriet** - Artist, **Saïd Bouamama** - Sociologist, **Zaina Bseiso** - Filmmaker, Producer, curator, **Orisel Castro López** - Filmmaker, Film programmer, **Eden Chahal** - Artist, Architect, **Nidhal Chamekh** - Artist, **Dalia Chams** - Writer, **Amira Chebli** - Actress, **Collectivo Los Ingrávidos** - Filmmakers collective, **Jocelyne Dakhli** - Researcher, **Mais Darwazah** -

Filmmaker, **Slimane Dazi** - Actor (FID), **Nelson Carlo de los Santos Arias** - Filmmaker, **Thaer A. Deeb** - Writer, **Mehdi Derfoufi** - Researcher, **Habiba Djahnine** - Filmmaker, Producer, Writer, **Karim Dridi** - Filmmaker, **Haidar Eid** - Researcher, **Nermine El Ansari** - Artist, **Zineb El Gharbi** - Researcher, **Yosra Ghliiss** - Researcher, **Azza El Hassan** - Filmmaker, **Abaher El Sakka** - Researcher, **Tamer Elsaid** - Filmmaker, **Jihan El-Tahri** – Filmmaker, **Ali Essafi** - Filmmaker, Visual Artist, **Sirine Fattouh** - visual artist, **Hassan Ferhani** - Filmmaker, **María Galindo** - Writer, Radio presenter, **Yosr Gasmi** - Filmmaker, **Iméne Ghazouani** - Filmmaker (FID), **Nacira Guénif Souilamas** - Sociologist, **Ruy Guerra** - Filmmaker, script Writer, **Ishtar Yasin Gutiérrez** - Filmmaker, **Luis Gutierrez Arias** - Filmmaker, **Wiame Haddad** - Artist, Filmmaker, **Sari Hanafi** - Sociologist, **Mahmoud Hamdan** - Filmmaker (FID), **Dina Heshmat** - Researcher, **Mahammad Hoogla-Kalfat** - Film critic, curator, Researcher, **Ismaël** - Filmmaker, **Manal Issa** - Actress, **Khaled Jarrar** - Artist, Filmmaker, **Maxime Jean-Baptiste** - Filmmaker, **Sanaa Kahena** - Artist , **Mohamed Kacimi** - Writer, **Samah Karaki** - Neuroscientist, Researcher, **Ghada Karmi** - Scholar, writer, **Alain Kassanda** - Filmmaker, **Majd Kayal** - Writer, **Djamel Kerkar** - Filmmaker, **Hannah Khalil** - Playwright, Script, Writer, **Khalil Khalsi** - Researcher, **Michel Khleifi** - Filmmaker (FID), **Nael Khleifi** - Filmmaker, **Bani Khoshnoudi** - Filmmaker, **Leila Kilani** - Filmmaker, **Waël Kodeih** - Musician, **Lina Kortobi** - Writer, Researcher, **Yanis Koussim** - Filmmaker, **Jorge La Ferla** - Artist, Researcher, **Camille-Levy Sarfati** - Curator, **Saad Lostan** - Actor, **Arab Lotfi** - Filmmaker, **Hala Lotfy** - Filmmaker, **Seloua Luste Boulbina** - Scholar, **Ziad Majed** - Political scientist, **Omar Malass** - Filmmaker, **Juruna Mallon** - Filmmaker, **Jumana Manna** - Filmmaker, Artist, **Bashar Mar Khalifé** - Musician, **Olivier Marboeuf** - Writer, Curator, **Randa Maroufi** - Filmmaker, **Mai Masri** - Filmmaker, **Rakan Mayasi** – Filmmaker, **Baya Medhaffar** - Filmmaker, Film programmer, **Samira Mekki** - Researcher, **Lena Merhej** - Graphic Artist, **Hala Mohammad** - Poet, Filmmaker, **Ghania Mouffok** - Journalist, Essayist, **Hala Moughanie** - Writer, **Ashraf Mtaweh** - Filmmaker, **Ashtar Muallem** - Artist , **Vanja Milena Munjin Paiva** - Film Critic, Programmer (FID Jury), **May Murad** - Artist, **Mayya Naamé** - Actress, **Nadine Naous** - Filmmaker, Script Writer, **Dalia Naous** - Dancer, Actress, **Nancy Naous** - Choreographer, **Emné Nasereddine** - Poet, **Arab and Tarzan Nasser** - Filmmakers, **May Odeh** - Producer, **Damien Ounouri** - Filmmaker, **Osloob** - Musician, **Amilcar Lucien Packer Yessouroun** - Artist, **Guillermo Quintero** - Filmmaker (FID), **Rania Rafei** - Filmmaker, **Eliane Raheb** - Filmmaker, **Dina Ramadan** - Scholar, **Amal Ramsis** - Filmmaker, **Basel Ramsis** - Filmmaker, Writer, **Yasmina Reggad** - Artist, **Insaf Rezagui** – Researcher, **Philip Rizk** - Filmmaker, **Paula Rodriguez Polanco** - Filmmaker, **Basyma Saad** - Filmmaker (FID), **Jilani Saâdi** – Filmmaker, **Leila Saadna** - Filmmaker, **Jowan Safadi** - Musician, **Hicham Safieddine** - Researcher, **Djamila Sahraoui** - Filmmaker, **Jayce Salloum** - Filmmaker, **Larissa Sansour** - Artist, **Leila Sansour** - Filmmaker, **Sbeih Sbeih** - Researcher, **Leila Seurat** - Researcher, **Jihane Sfeir** - Researcher, **Mohamed Shawky Hassan** - Filmmaker, **Shela Sheikh** - Researcher, **Muzna Shihabi** - Essayist, **Sabine Sidawi** - Producer, **Alaeddine Slim** - Filmmaker, **Aïcha Snoussi** - Artist, **Sarah Srage** - Filmmaker, **Malena Szlam** - Filmmaker, **Mehran Tamadon** - Filmmaker, **Wassyla Tamzali** - Writer, **Bissan Tay** - Producer, **Salima Tenfiche** - Researcher, **Oraib Toukan** - Artist, Researcher, **Bruno Varela** - Filmmaker, **Ana Vaz** - Filmmaker (FID Jury), **Françoise Vergès** - Writer, Political scientist, **Nehal Vyas** - Producteur, Filmmaker (FID), **Mohanad Yaqubi** - Filmmaker, **Fadi Yazigi** - Visual Artist, **Louisa Yousfi** - Writer, **Ikbâl Zalila** - Film programmer, Critic, **Saber Zammouri** - Filmmaker, **Hani Zurob** – Artist

NEW SIGNATORIES IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE CALL

Hakim Abdelnaeem – Artist, **Kamal Abdul-Malak** – Musician, **Judith Abensour** – Filmmaker, Art critic, **Lara Abou Saïfan** – Producer, **Nadia Leïla Aissaoui** – Sociologist, Psychoanalyst, **Naoura Al Azmé** – Photographer, **Lina Alhafez** – Filmmaker, Researcher, **Isadora Alves** – Actress, **Nadia Ali** – Researcher, **Razan Al Salah** – Filmmaker, **Valentina Alvarado Matos** – Artist, **Rania Amdouni** – Actress, **Ismat Amiralai** – Graphic designer, **Carla Aouad** – Artist, **Chakib Ararou** – Researcher, **Laura Arensburg** – Artist, **Shayma' Awawdeh** – Filmmaker, **Salma Azmeh** – Translator, **Souraya Baghdadi** – Dancer, **Michel Balagué** – Producer, **Bernadette Balalas** – Speech therapist, Amateur actress, **Mariam Balhas** – Artist, **Luciani Barisone** – Film critic, Artistic director, **Bárbara S. Barroso** – Filmmaker, Researcher, **Giorgio Bassil** – Filmmaker, **Frederic Bayer Azem** – Filmmaker, **Ahmed Bedjaoui** – Filmmaker, **Hanan Benammar** – Artist, **Kaouther Ben Azouz** – Professor, **Hajer Ben Boubaker** – Researcher, **Karim Bengana** – Writer director, **Mouna Ben Haj Zekri** – Actress, Director, **Mouna Ben Hammed** – Filmmaker, **Sihem Benmina** – Writer, **Samia Bentounes** – Trade unionist, **Zahra Berrada** – Filmmaker, **Olivier Boischot** – Producer, **Paola Bonucci** – Costume designer, **Lucie Bonvin** – Distributor, Programmer, **Christian Borghino** – Festival programmer, **Nabil Boubkeur** – Assistant director, **Sarah Bouzi** – Director, **Josiane Cadeddu** -, **Patricia Caillé** – Academic, **Johanna Caraire** – Festival director, **Eric Carlier** – Editor, **Aurélié Carmouze** – Painter, **Carlos Casas** – Filmmaker, **Azza Chaabouni** – Researcher, **Saad Chakali** – Librarian, **Doha Chams** – Writer, Journalist, **Donald Charles** – Filmmaker, Editor, Producer, **Caroline Châtelet** – Critic, Journalist, **Nicolas Cohen** – Photographer, **Vincent Commaret** – Musician, Filmmaker, **Ana Contreras** – Artistic director, **Olivier Crabbé** – CGT 04, **Olivia Csiky Trnka** – Writer and director, **Randi Deguilhem** - Emeritus research director, **Martine Derain** – Artist, Publisher, **Elodie Desprès** – Filmmaker, **Sophie Divry** – Writer, **Mildred Duran Gamba** – Curator, Researcher, **Sahar El Echi** – Filmmaker, Film programmer, **Mohamed El Maghrebi** – Electrician, **Manuel Embalse** – Filmmaker, **Licia Eminent** – Screenwriter, **Catherine Estrade** – Singer, Filmmaker, **Adrien Faucheux** – Editor, Filmmaker, **Anne Marie Faux** – Filmmaker, **Ryan Ferko** – Filmmaker, **La Fondation du Journal Féministe Algérien** – Feminist production, **Saïf Fradj** – Visual Artist, Filmmaker, **Lola Frederich** – Filmmaker, **Sébastien Garnier** – Researcher, **Gérard Gendrau** – Visual artist, **Sylvain George** – Filmmaker, **Vincent Gérard** – Filmmaker, **Zaynab Ghaïs-Mortada** – Artist, Researcher, **Nadia Ghanem** – Filmmaker, **Terri Ginsberg** - Academic - **Ève Giordani** – Artist, **Mathilde Girard** – Filmmaker, **Thomas Glaser** – Editor, Photographer, **Marisa Gnondahô dit Simon** – Musician, Actress, Author, **Corinne Grassi** – Project manager, **Jérémy Gravat** – Filmmaker, **Raphael Grisey** – Filmmaker, **Sanja Grozdanic** – Filmmaker, **Michelle Guerci** – Journalist, **José Luis Guerin** – Filmmaker, **Amel Hadjadj** – Documentary production manager at the Algerian feminist newspaper, **Ratiba Hadj-Moussa** – University Professor, Senior Scholar, **Nathalie Hainaut** – Art critic, **Ghassan Halwani** – Artist, Filmmaker, **Amine Hattou** – Filmmaker, **Charlie Hewison** – Academic, **Alix Hugonnier** – Artist, **Sandra Iché** – Theater artist, Teacher, **Faizi Jalel Eddine** – Filmmaker, **Dhia Jerbi** – Filmmaker, **Gaëlle Jones** – Producer, **Valérie Jouve** – Photographer, Filmmaker, **Zineb Kharroubi** – Distributor, **Hydra Khelid** – Writer, Editor, **Gelare Khoshgozaran** – Filmmaker, **Mahmoud Korek** – Animation & VFX artist, **Youcef Krache** – Photographer, Producer, **Julie Labas** – Screenwriter, **Souad Labbize** – Author, **Malika Laichour Romane** – Director, Producer, **Corentin Lê** – Film critic, **Léonard Ledoux** – Editor, Filmmaker, **Radouan Leflahi** – Actor, **Cecile Lehn** – Production manager, Actress, **Jean-Louis Leleu** – Researcher, **Catherine Libert** – Filmmaker, **Insaf Machta** – Film critic,

Programmer, **Idrissi Manar** – Curator, Researcher, **Loreto Martinez Troncoso** – Artist, Writer, **Sylvie Mazzei** – Retired, **Nadia Meflah** – Author, **Hanin Mlhem** – Filmmaker, **Monique Monfort** -, **Christophe Montaucieux** – Videomaker, **Léa Morin** – Curator, Researcher, **Habib Mostefai** – Sports coach, **Marcel Mrejen** – Artist, Filmmaker, **Angelique Muller** – Producer, **Hani Munif** – Architect, **Jihan (Yaqian) Najar** – Filmmaker, **Harran Nataen** – Artist, **Valérie Osouf** – Curator, Filmmaker, **Ager Oueslati** – Filmmaker, **Emmanuel Parraud** – Filmmaker, Producer, Distributor, **Fred Piet** – Editor, **Anaïs Pitkevicht** – Festival programmer, **Guy Regis Jr** – Writer, **Marine Relinger** – Director, Filmmaker, **Nathan Reneaud** – Author, **Anne Revillard** – Sociologist, **Jean-Louis Rey** – Architect, **Solène Rigot** – Actress, **Mohamed Rochdi Sifaoui** – Director of Tënk, **Adeline Rosenstein** – Director, **Pascal Rousse** – Researcher, **Anna Roussillon** – Filmmaker, Teacher, **Maria Carolina Salomé** – Actress, **Mohammed Sammoudi** – Actor, Director, **Valentin Schaepelynck** – Researcher, **Raquel Schefer** – Researcher, Programmer, **Clément Schneider** – Filmmaker, Teacher, **Anna Maria Donatella Sciverès** – Set designer, **Sid Ahmed Semiane** – Author, Filmmaker, **Arindam Sen** – Writer, Curator, **Sonko Seynabou** – Writer, **Sihem Sidaoui** – Researcher, **Eyal Sivan** – Filmmaker, Essayist, **Marion Slitine** – Anthropologist, **Krouna Sourour** – Cultural manager, **Carola Spadoni** – Filmmaker and artist, **Joffrey Speno** – Artist, filmmaker and programmer, **Kenza Talmat** – Researcher, **Noah Teichner** – Researcher, Filmmaker, **Chloé Terren** – Director of photography, **Ali Thabet** – Director, Choreographer, **Lo Thivolle** – Filmmaker, **طيبة Tibah** – Musician, **Sarah Tikanouine** – Filmmaker, **Alix Tulipe** – Editor, **Piero Usberti** – Director, **Mustafa Uzuner** – Filmworker, **Laura Vasquez** – Writer, **Carlos Vásquez Méndez** – Film artist, **María Vera** – Sales Agent, **Olia Verriopoulou** – Filmmaker, **Giorgia Villa** – Editor, **Marie Voignier** – Filmmaker, Artist, **Pierre Volland** – Filmmaker, Teacher, **Michel Volte** – Producer, **Pauline Xiradakis** – Teacher, **David Yon** – Filmmaker, **Khadija Zammouli** – Filmmaker, **Selma Zghidi** – Editor, **Aleksandre Zharaya** – Filmmaker