

Demonstrators in Switzerland call for ban on Israel in 2024 Olympic Games

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Protestors, holding Palestinian flags, stage a demonstration demanding that Israel should be banned from the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in front of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Lausanne, Switzerland on 12 June, 2024 [Muhammet ?kbal Arslan/Anadolu Agency

Lausanne, June 16 (RHC)-- Hundreds of protesters in Switzerland have demanded that Israel be barred from competing in the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris amid the ongoing genocide in Gaza, Anadolu Agency reports.

Demonstrators gathered in front of the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne with hands painted red to draw attention to the civilian casualties in Palestinian Territory. They left red hand marks on the building's entrance in an effort to convince the Committee to take action against Israel.

Pointing out that the Committee "only took a few days" to exclude Russia and Belarus from the 2022 Olympics over the war in Ukraine, which began on 24 February, 2022, the protesters held up a banner saying: "Let's ban the genocidal Israeli state from the Olympic Games."

Athletes from Russia and Belarus will be allowed to compete in this year's Olympics as neutrals, according to the Committee. They will not be allowed to take part in the opening ceremony and will use no flags, emblems or anthems, with no officials from either country's government invited to the games taking place on 26 July thru 11 August.

The demonstrators in Lausanne called Israel a "criminal state" with two top-level officials for whom the International Criminal Court Prosecutor is seeking arrest warrants.

Israel "mocks the Court decisions of the International Criminal Court as well as the International Court of Justice," said a brochure published by the protesters, who urged for sanctions to be imposed on Tel Aviv.

They called on French President, Emmanuel Macron, to cut off diplomatic ties with Israel, particularly arms, impose cultural and academic boycotts on the country, and end an agreement allowing French nationals to serve in the Israeli army. Some 4,000 French citizens are currently participating in the Israeli military's offensive on the enclave.

The protesters chanted slogans against Israel's "genocide", holding up Palestinian flags and banners reading: "Boycott Israel, boycott genocide", "Humanity has failed" and "Free Palestine".

The peaceful protest lasted just over two hours and ended without police intervention.

Israel has faced international condemnation amid its continued brutal offensive on Gaza since the 7 October 2023 attack by Hamas, despite a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire.

Eight months into the Israeli war, vast tracts of Gaza lay in ruins amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water and medicine.

Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which in its latest ruling has ordered Tel Aviv to immediately halt its operation in the southern city of Rafah, where over a million Palestinians had sought refuge.

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