# Celtic Football Club's political flag controversy: supporters rally for Palestine



Celtic Football Club has found itself at the centre of controversy regarding the display of political flags and symbols at its stadium in Glasgow. The club has issued an appeal to its supporters to refrain from showcasing banners, flags, and symbols related to the ongoing conflict in Palestine and Israel, stating that while it acknowledges the personal views of its fans, such displays are not permitted at Celtic Park.

The call to action from the club comes amidst a notable increase in protests led by Celtic fans, who have begun holding up red cards during matches. This campaign aims to advocate for the exclusion of Israel from international sporting events, drawing parallels with historical instances such as the ban imposed on South Africa during the apartheid era and on Japan and Germany by FIFA following World War II.

The situation is for the time being compounded by a case brought forth by South Africa to the International Court of Justice, which accuses Israel of committing genocide against the Palestinian people. The resolution of this case is not anticipated for several years. Additionally, arrest warrants have been issued for key Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, over allegations of war crimes.

The protests have gained traction not only within Celtic’s fanbase but have also resonated with supporters across Europe and further afield. However, this movement has faced criticism, with some organisations labelling it as antisemitic. Supporters of the campaign argue that their protest targets the state of Israel rather than the Jewish community.

Occupying territories, namely Gaza and the West Bank, are recognised as such by both the United Nations and the UK government, and this context further complicates the narrative surrounding the protests.

In an open letter directed at the Celtic board, the Gaza Genocide Emergency Committee expressed their perspective, arguing that condemning the displays of Palestinian flags is misguided. The letter highlights the significance of such displays as expressions of solidarity with oppressed populations. They commend the Celtic fanbase for invoking the club's founding principles through their protests against what they describe as genocide. The letter implies that the club should embrace its fans’ activism, noting that Celtic has a historical connection with the Palestinian cause through the actions and support of its supporters.

The committee further asserts that the ongoing protests are instrumental in promoting the cause of Palestinian rights and that the club has a responsibility to support this movement. They reference the historical contributions of Celtic supporters to Palestinian causes, suggesting that the club should recognize and amplify these efforts. They also critique the absence of sanctions against Israeli clubs by UEFA and FIFA, pointing to perceived inconsistencies in the treatment of different nations in the sphere of international sport.

Meanwhile, Celtic fans have been galvanised by a spirit of solidarity across global pro-Palestinian movements. The fan-led Red Card campaign has begun to influence other clubs internationally, as supporters advocate for similar expressions of support for the Palestinian people.

As the situation develops, the club's stance alongside its supporters will be closely observed, with many awaiting the response from the Celtic board to the growing calls for solidarity and action from within the fan community.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.timesofisrael.com/why-scotlands-fiercest-soccer-rivalry-features-israeli-vs-palestinian-flags/> - This article discusses the longstanding tradition of displaying Israeli and Palestinian flags during matches between Celtic and Rangers, which aligns with the claim about the political flags in Celtic Park and the club's appeal to its supporters.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-67057585> - This piece reports on the protests by Celtic fans advocating for the exclusion of Israel from international sporting events, which is a key aspect of the ongoing campaign highlighted in the article.
* <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/18/celtic-fans-protest-against-israel> - The article details the protests led by Celtic fans, specifically mentioning the use of red cards as a symbol of their campaign, reinforcing the claim regarding the recent actions of the fanbase.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2023/nov/22/celtic-fans-stand-in-solidarity-with-palestinian-people> - This report covers the solidarity displayed by Celtic fans for the Palestinian cause, providing context for the club's historical connections and critics' accusations of antisemitism as mentioned in the article.
* <https://www.dw.com/en/celtic-fc-fans-protest-over-israel-gaza-conflict/a-63263471> - This article addresses the international ramifications of the protests, illustrating how Celtic's fanbase has gained support across Europe, which corroborates claims about the wider impact of their activism.