

Santa in Distress, Three Wise Men Arrested By Ari Edwin | Bethlehem | 24 December 2012

From the start of Israel's construction in 2002 of its Separation Wall, Santa Clause has had much difficulty on his annual Christmas routes (Bethlehem is, after all, located in the Occupied Palestinian Territories).



In a recent photo Santa, otherwise referred to as St. Nicholas, can be seen chipping away at the Israeli Wall. On the 24th of July 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) declared the Israeli Wall “contrary to international law” and instructed that this illegal construction end. Ignoring the ICJ, Israel is continuing to build its wall (sometimes called the "Apartheid Wall" because it separates people on the basis on ethnicity).

The Israeli Wall cuts through Bethlehem and isolates major holy sites such as Rachel's Tomb, the Cave of the Patriarchs and the Church of Nativity (the birthplace of Christ). Since its building started in the Bethlehem area, Palestinians have submitted 520 cases to the court in an attempt to retain their property adjacent to the Wall, mostly to no avail. Palestinians, among whom many are Christians, can only submit their cases to an Israeli *military* court and not to a *civil* court (as Israeli citizens and illegal settlers are allowed to do). The Wall, once complete, will be 709 km long and over 8 meters high. Human rights workers argue that the Wall is not for security reasons (as Israel claims), but rather to “grab” Palestinian agricultural land.



Supporting Santa

Local Palestinian supporters of peace (including many Santa supporters), a year after the ICJ opinion, gathered in Ramallah in July 2005 and issued a call to the international community for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) until Israel breaks down its Separation Wall abides by international law.



The BDS campaign has had much success in the six years since its launch. In South Africa, for example, the South African Council of Churches issued a resolution in which it states: *“[We] Confess our contribution towards the suffering of Palestinians through our silence or lack of action. [We commit ourselves] toward ensuring that the call and challenge from our Palestinian brothers and sisters will not go unheard ... [and we] support the non-violent resistance to the occupation of Palestine such as the call to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign. This is a commitment toward a just and lasting peace and reconciliation in and for Israel and Palestine”*

In his support for BDS, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, said: *“surely we must recognize that people caged in, starved and stripped of their essential material and political rights must resist their Pharaoh? Surely resistance also makes us human? Palestinians have chosen, like we did, the nonviolent tools of boycott, divestment and sanctions.”*

Just yesterday, 23 December 2011, BDS campaigners were celebrating after the West London

Waste Authority excluded the multinational, Veolia, from a £485 million contract. Human rights workers across the globe have been campaigning against Veolia (as part of BDS) due to the company's involvement, with the Israeli government, in violations of human rights and humanitarian law. To date Veolia has lost contracts up to \$12 Billion due to its complicity.

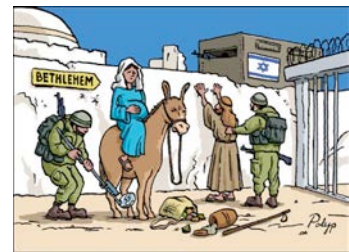
Efforts to contact Santa were unsuccessful. A source close to him has said that he is very “distressed”.

In a related case, three wise men are arrested*



In a related case, three wise men were arrested today attempting to enter Jerusalem, en-route to Bethlehem. According to an Israeli official, the Iraqi nationals were carrying massive amounts of flammable substances known as “frankincense” and “myrrh.” While not explosives themselves, Israeli security experts revealed that these two substances could be used as a fuse to detonate a larger bomb. The three alleged terrorists were also carrying gold, presumably to finance the rest of their mission.

Also implicated in the plot were two Palestinians named Joseph and Mary. An anonymous source close to the family overheard Mary saying that her son would “bring down the mighty from their thrones and lift up the lowly.” In what appears to be a call to resistance, the couple claims their son will someday “help to unite and free the world.” “These people match, in word and deed, our terrorist profile perfectly,” an IDF spokesperson said.



All of the suspects claimed they heard angels singing of a new era of hope for the afflicted and poor. As one Israeli Settler put it, “These One State wackos are talking about overturning our entire Israeli Bantustan model. In fact the Israeli Separation Wall and Bantustan model are working perfectly well and the objections from the ICJ are ridiculous. I don’t care what some angel sang or for that matter the UN or ICJ say; God wants Israel to be king and He is on our side. And so is the USA.”



A member of Knesset (Israeli parliament) has announced that it might be prudent to cancel Christmas until others in the plot are rounded up. “I assure you that this measure will be temporary, like our Occupation of Palestine. Israelis love Christmas (and peace) as much as anyone but our security comes above everything. People can still shop and give gifts, but we’re asking them not to think about world peace until after we have rid the world of evil people. For Israelis to sing, ‘peace on earth, goodwill to all’, is just the wrong message to send to these Palestinians at this time.”

The strongest opponents of the Christmas “ban” were, surprisingly, representatives of American retail stores, movie chains and makers of porcelain Christmas figurines. “This is a tempest in a teapot,” fumed one unnamed American businessman. “No one thinks of the political meaning of Christmas any more. Christmas isn’t about a savior who will bring hope to the outcasts of the world; it’s about feasts, presents and bright lights. History has shown that mature people are perfectly capable of singing hymns about world peace while still supporting whatever war or occupation our leaders think necessary. People long ago



stopped tying religion to the real events in the world”.

It is rare for America to be critical of Israel. In fact, America has used its veto power at the United Nations, to protect Israeli actions (often deemed illegal), over 40 times. Most recently, in February this year, the USA vetoed a resolution critical of Israeli settlement construction in the holy city of Jerusalem.



There has been no word on where the three suspects are being kept, or when their trial might take place. They are being held under the notorious "administrative detention order", a law resembling Apartheid South Africa's "detention without trial". Amnesty International has issued an urgent appeal for the immediate release of the three wise men or "trial in full conformity with international fair trial standards".

Israeli authorities have not responded to the Amnesty International statement and are instead asking citizens who see other Arabs resembling nativity scene figures to contact the Israeli internal security agency, the Shin Bet.

BDS SOUTH AFRICA
WWW.BDSSOUTHAFRICA.COM

* Based on Pastor Jim Rigby's article, "Christmas Is No Time To Talk About War And Peace".