

Dear Mayor Murray,

My name is Selma Al-Aswad and as a decade-long resident of Seattle and firm believer in the power of civic engagement and community organizing, I am writing to you with deep concern regarding your upcoming participation in the '40 Years of Pride' Conference and Seattle Business & Trade Mission to Israel in June.

I am a queer Palestinian who has found a home and community in local LGBT organizing and I have a deep respect for your continued support and uplift of LGBT causes. As the executive leader in our city government, it is imperative that the campaigns that you champion, including those that serve the LGBT community, bend towards justice. It is because of that, that I am disappointed in your decision to partner with A Wider Bridge and Aguda for the upcoming events in Israel.

The presence of '40 Years of Pride' and like conferences exist within a context that is important to note. Over the last several years, Israel advocacy organizations like A Wider Bridge have engaged a new kind of Israel advocacy that is focused on using LGBT and women's rights discussions to promote an image of Israel as a progressive country in order to cover over its brutal human rights violations. Events like this have become part of a strategic campaign where LGBT culture is exploited and manipulated to promote the idea that Israel is a great place for all LGBT people. This strategy has come to be called pinkwashing by those who oppose it. It directly hurts queer people like me, and our entire community.

Your call for a boycott of Indiana in the immediate wake of Indiana's SB 568 indicates your belief in the tactic, one which employs economic and cultural pressure until restitution is made. Boycott is a respected tactic that has been used by national and international leaders throughout history. You stated that Indiana's law does not reflect Seattle's values. I believe that the apartheid policies of Israel, which have been widely [credited](#), are also against Seattle's values. I hope they are also against your values.

Ten years ago, Palestinian civil society called for international boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel until it complies with international law and universal principles of human rights. This boycott includes a cultural and academic component, in which speakers, artists and cultural workers are refusing to perform or speak in Israel in order to put pressure on the government regarding its violations of international law. Today I am urging you to answer the call.

You have an incredible opportunity ahead of you to act in line with your values, the same values that pushed you to a swift call for boycott before. Today I urge you to answer the call to boycott Israeli institutions by cancelling your scheduled trip until they comply with international law and end its unjust apartheid system. I would appreciate the chance to share my concerns with you during a meeting and look forward to the opportunity to connect more.

Sincerely,
Selma Al-Aswad