

# AUSTRALIANS FOR PALESTINE

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*Prepared by SK/AFP*

## Melbourne's film goers asked to protest

# Providing a Voice

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Press Release No 16 – 24 July 2009*

The Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) is opening tonight with the Australian film *Balibo*, but the shock withdrawal by highly-acclaimed British film director Ken Loach of his film "Looking for Eric" has been reverberating around the world. It is not the first time that Mr Loach has taken such a laudatory step in support of a boycott call by Palestinian artists and academics of events sponsored by Israel.

The importance of this boycott cannot be overstated. Israel is oppressing and brutalising some 4 million Palestinians and carrying out war crimes at the same time that it is cultivating an image of normalcy with acquiescing governments and institutions around the world.

Australians for Palestine spokesman Moammar Mashni said "it is precisely because governments are not holding Israel to account that civil society must find ways of bringing pressure to end the suffering of the Palestinians." Mr Mashni continued, "deliberately imprisoning, starving and denying assistance to the entire population of Gaza is a war crime and we cannot pretend that it is not happening."

Mr Loach made it very clear to MIFF's executive director Richard Moore that in light of Israel's refusal to abide by international law "remaining sympathetic but detached observers was no longer an option."

Australians for Palestine supports Mr Loach's principled stand and the Palestinian call to boycott and will be staging a nonviolent protest at the opening of the festival outside Hamer Hall, The Arts Centre, 100 St Kilda Road, Melbourne at 6.30pm on Friday 24 July. Protest cards addressed to Richard Moore at MIFF will be available on the night for people wishing to help distribute them at the festival's various sessions.

For further information contact:

- Moammar Mashni 0419 999 773

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