



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release
January 30, 2025

Contact: Publishers for Palestine
publishersforpalestine@gmail.com

Publishers Call for Boycotting the Frankfurt Book Fair

NEW YORK, LONDON, JAKARTA – Publishers for Palestine, a coalition of nearly 600 publishers in 50 countries, is calling for an industry-wide boycott of the world’s largest publishing event, the Frankfurt Book Fair (Frankfurter Buchmesse–FBM).

The Publishers for Palestine call for boycott comes after the Fair has failed to address its ties to German state and corporate partnership in Israel’s genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, and programming that ignores Israel’s regime of occupation and apartheid. The Fair has also [celebrated](#) the awarding of the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade to American journalist Anne Applebaum, and [hosted](#) the author—who has [publicly praised](#) Israel’s illegal bombing of Palestinian media outlets as part of its [journocide](#)—during the Fair’s 2024 edition.

The military and diplomatic complicity of Western states, especially the US, UK, and Germany, has enabled Israel to destroy life-sustaining conditions in Gaza. To prevent more loss of life, it is clear that the current ceasefire must be followed by an end to the siege and occupation, and the dismantling of Israel’s apartheid rule. An industry central to the global circulation of information and the direction of cultural tides, the publishing world has an important role to play in pursuing accountability for genocide and apartheid, as part of the global Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

An [open letter](#) issued to FBM by Publishers for Palestine last September that requested actions of redress regarding Palestine remains unacknowledged. In the letter, international publishers asked FBM to denounce Israel’s targeting of Gaza’s writers, students, schools, universities, libraries, archives, and book publishers in its ongoing genocide. [UN experts](#) have condemned Israel’s “domicide, urbicide, scholasticide, medicide, cultural genocide and, more recently, ecocide,” while FBM remains silent.

Publishers for Palestine made four basic demands of the Fair:

- condemn Israel’s regime of genocide and apartheid in Gaza and affirm the human rights of the Palestinian people;
- refuse collaboration with complicit Israeli book publishers, including by barring their participation in the Frankfurt Book Fair;
- denounce the attacks on Palestinian writers, journalists, and academics—and acknowledge that such attacks are part of a genocidal project seeking to erase Palestinian life and culture;
- and create programming that prominently features Palestinian writers, publishers, and narratives.

A year after the International Court of Justice's [ruling](#) of a plausible genocide, and nine months after the [UN's](#) report of Israel's scholasticide in Gaza, the Frankfurt Book Fair has shown no sign of fulfilling the above calls nor of slowing its support for Israeli apartheid.

The Fair's deep ethical inconsistencies include a 2023 pledge to increase Israeli programming, in stark contrast with its 2022 ban of Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. FBM's [well documented](#) ties to complicit Israeli corporations and institutions and its entanglement with the German state include relationships with German multibillion-dollar publishing multinationals Holtzbrinck Publishing Group and Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA., each of which hold multimillion-dollar investment portfolios in Israeli tech, AI, surveillance, and security technologies. Holtzbrinck also hosts the Frankfurt Book Fair's Jerusalem International Book Forum Breakfast, a long-standing [annual event](#).

As the Israeli siege of Gaza and genocidal violence intensified in the fall of 2023, FBM cancelled and indefinitely delayed an award ceremony for Palestinian author Adania Shibli scheduled to take place at the Fair, while director Juergen Boos announced that the Fair stood "with complete solidarity on the side of Israel."

Such incidents sparked [withdrawals](#) from the 2023 edition on the part of a number of organizations, including the Arab Publishers Association, the Emirates Publishers Association, and the Sharjah Book Fair. Indonesia and Malaysia both undertook [national boycotts](#) of the Fair, with statements from [Indonesian Book Publishers Association](#) (Ikapi) and the [Malaysian Ministry of Education](#)

In advance of the 2024 Fair, author Leanne Betasamosake Simpson said,

"Palestine has an incredibly rich history and practice of literature, storytelling and artistic and intellectual exchange. Palestinian writers and artists have continued writing and creating through the ongoing Nakba, Israeli apartheid and settler colonialism and genocide. I stand with Publishers for Palestine demanding the Frankfurt Book Fair denounce the genocide, affirm the rights of Palestinians, denounce the targeting of writers and journalists in Palestine, and call for the book festival to implement substantive programming featuring Palestinian writers and artists, while fostering a safe and supportive space for Palestinian cultural workers at the festival."

Until those demands are met, Publishers for Palestine calls for a full boycott of the Frankfurt Book Fair / Frankfurter Buchmesse and urges the global publishing community to join.

###

The Frankfurt Book Fair takes place October 15-19, 2025. It is the largest and most prestigious annual international gathering of book publishers and authors, bringing in over 200,000 visitors. For publishers, the fair is a critical venue for the arrangement of translation and rights deals, as it is for announcing and exhibiting new books.

Publishers for Palestine is a horizontally organized global coalition of publishers that oppose Israel's occupation and apartheid regime in Palestine. The coalition hosts and supports awareness-raising campaigns and events, tracks censorship of Palestinian writing as well as censorship of those in the publishing and media industries speaking out against the genocide, and liaises with groups in related cultural industries that oppose Israel's apartheid regime.

###
