

New York socialites dismayed by protest at Leviev-sponsored fundraiser

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Adalah-NY: The Coalition for Justice in the Middle East Media Contacts: info@adalahny.org New York socialites dismayed by protest at Leviev-sponsored fundraiser

Museum of the City of New York welcomes partner rejected by UNICEF & Oxfam



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New York, NY, September 23, 2008 – Manhattan's elite were aghast to be greeted this evening by 25 chanting protesters when they exited their SUVs and limos to attend a glitzy fundraiser sponsored by Israeli billionaire Lev Leviev for the Museum of the City of New York. Leviev has been criticized for his businesses' human rights violations and unethical practices in Palestine, Angola, Namibia and New York City.

The Director of the Museum of the City of New York had failed to respond to phone calls and a September 16th letter from the New York rights coalition Adalah-NY, that is promoting a boycott of Leviev's businesses. Adalah-NY's letter informed the museum

of the inconsistency of Leviev's business practices with the museum's mission, and with non-profit ethical standards. Alex Stern of Adalah-NY explained, "I've been going to the Museum of the City of New York all my life to see exhibits about New York's diversity and about local communities battling against poverty. So it's upsetting to me that the museum welcomed a sponsor who is impoverishing and destroying communities around the world."

Over the past year both UNICEF and Oxfam have publicly rejected Leviev's support because of his companies' human rights violations, and Leviev has received a barrage of negative media. The government of the United Kingdom is now under pressure to cancel plans to rent its new Embassy in Tel Aviv from Leviev due to his companies' construction of Israeli settlements in violation of international law. The companies of Shaya Boymelgree, Leviev's partner in one settlement, are being sued in Canadian courts for war crimes by the West Bank village of Bil'in.

At last year's fundraiser, according to JCKonline, Leviev "was gracious enough to bathe the upper echelon of New York City society in diamonds for the evening." This year, a who's who of wealthy New Yorkers, with bios and photos posted on the website Fame Game, and including Rockefellers, Roosevelt and Lebenthals, were greeted by noisy protesters with drums, whistles and chants, including:

"Fashionistas and socialites, Leviev denies human rights"

"New York City glitterati, If you wear Lev's jewels, you're naughty"

"Oxfam and UNICEF won't take his dimes, Because they know Leviev's crimes"

15 New York City police officers lined the entrance to the museum and attempted to prevent protesters from giving attendees flyers or taking attendees' pictures. Protesters cited offenses including: construction by Leviev's companies Africa Israel and Leader of the Israeli settlements Mattityahu East, Zufim, Har Homa and Maale Adumim on Palestinian land in the

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Israeli Occupied West Bank; accusations in New York Magazine that Angolan security companies employed by Leviev have been involved in torturing, sexually abusing and even murdering Angolans; Leviev's recent firing in Namibia of around 200 striking diamond polishers, some of whom were already struggling to survive on less than \$2 a day; and, in Brooklyn and at the Apthorp in Manhattan, Leviev's construction of luxury apartments that displace low- and moderate-income residents.

Andrew Kadi from Adalah-NY noted that, "Businessmen like Leviev, who abuse human rights in Palestine and worldwide need to be exposed to the public, as do non-profits that partner with them and allow rights abusers to project a false image of humanitarianism."

<http://nyc.indymedia.org/en/2008/09/100205.shtml>