

28/12/2017

סימוכין : sara2271

To:

Mr. Georgios Makropoulos,

FIDE Deputy President

Re: FIDE's indifference to actual boycott of the Israeli Chess players in the current World Championship .

Dear Sir,

I was greatly disappointed to be informed of your total disregard of the fact that the Israeli chess team has been denied access to the current World Championship taking place in Saudi Arabia, thus depriving them of their fundamental right to participate in the games .

This indifference indicates your biased approval of an illegal boycott against Israeli players in an international sports championship. Depriving any sports player of the opportunity to participate in an international sports championship on political grounds is a blatant violation of the most basic principles underlying any major international sports events. Every international championship, including FIDE's world championship, is based on the notion of welcoming any eligible participant regardless of his nationality, gender, religion, or any other irrelevant criteria except for his or her sports skill. I find it needless to state the various charters and statutes relating to the fundamental separation between politics and sports. You are quite familiar with these basic principles, and yet have failed to live up to them in the present championship.

Therefore, I strongly protest your objectionable acceptance of the fact that Israeli chess players were in fact banned from the current championship in Saudi Arabia and I call upon you to amend this by immediately declaring that such a boycott of Israeli chess players will never occur again. Under these circumstances, where Israel, a member country of the World Chess Federation, is not represented in the tournament, this championship must be cancelled and moved to a country which fulfills the criteria in FIDE's charter and will not support this illegal boycott.

I must insist that the current tournament, which does not include Israeli players, should consequently not be considered an international championship. It is unheard of that a championship of a world body, whose charter explicitly states that no country can be boycotted, would continue to be played in a country which does not allow access to any of the participants. The contract with the Saudi Arabian federation which would allow them to organize this event for the coming years, 2018-2019, must be immediately canceled since they have proved that they are not willing to abide by the regulations. Furthermore, the World Chess Federation must ensure that any country which is granted the privilege of hosting any competition must be aware of the fact that it is obliged to open its gates to all participants. This principle should be emphasized in all World Championships from now on. I would also urge you to compensate the Israeli players who were appallingly denied visas and thus were not granted equal opportunity.

Minister of Culture & Sport

World championships are an amazing opportunity to bridge between people and nations. Sports championships should remain neutral and live up to the spirit of equality and the brotherhood of man. Your most important mission is to make certain that these values that are already embedded in your own statutes will be strictly applied in the coming world championship. The wrongful precedent occurring in Saudi Arabia this championship must be censured and should never happen again .

Finally, I look forward to hearing from you soon and urge you to immediately take serious measures to conclude this unacceptable incident .

Sincerely yours,

**MK Brig. Gen. (Res.) Miri Regev,
Minister of Culture and Sport.**

