



THE HIND RAJAB FOUNDATION

Hind Rajab Foundation

Game Over Israel: Sports Culture as a Cog in Genocide

Executive Summary

Sport should unite people across divides. In Israel, however, football supporter culture has long been a breeding ground for racism, fascism, and incitement. From Beitar Jerusalem's *La Familia* chanting "Death to Arabs" to racist tifos and banners targeting Palestinians and Black players, stadiums in Israel are steeped in hate.

During the genocide in Gaza, this hate has been exported from terraces to the battlefield. Soldiers proudly wave club flags in destroyed neighborhoods, tag Palestinian homes with ultras graffiti, dedicate killings to their teams, and broadcast selfies where genocide is reframed as a "football victory."

The Hind Rajab Foundation (HRF) has collected and verified extensive evidence of this systematic instrumentalisation of football culture in genocide. This report integrates our findings — from stadium racism, to assaults in Europe, to soldiers turning genocide into football propaganda — and demonstrates why Israel's place in global sport is indefensible.

Football and genocide cannot coexist.

1. Racism in Israeli Football Supporter Culture

Israeli football has long been marred by racism, exclusion, and extremist supporter groups. Instead of serving as a unifying sport, the terraces of Israeli stadiums have become arenas of hate speech, incitement, and the glorification of militarism. This culture, normalized for decades, has now been transplanted from the stadium into the battlefield of genocide in Gaza.

Beitar Jerusalem & La Familia

Beitar Jerusalem is notorious as the only major Israeli football club that has never signed an Arab player, despite Arabs making up nearly 20% of the population. This exclusion is not incidental but has become a defining feature of the club's identity, openly celebrated by sections of its supporters as a mark of ethnic "purity." At the centre of this toxic culture is the ultras faction *La Familia*, one of the most violent and racist fan groups in world football. Their members are infamous for explicitly fascist behaviour: marching through Jerusalem chanting "*Death to Arabs*," waving Israeli nationalist symbols in stadiums, and attacking rival supporters with racist abuse. When Beitar management attempted to sign Muslim players from Chechnya in 2013, *La Familia* responded with fury — booing the players, assaulting them, and firebombing the club's offices in an act of violent defiance against even minimal inclusivity.

The group's violence extends far beyond the terraces. Members have physically attacked Arab workers in Jerusalem, carried out acts of arson, and regularly glorify settler violence and Israeli war crimes in Gaza and the West Bank. Their chants, banners, and actions openly call for the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, making them not just football hooligans but active participants in the cultural infrastructure of genocide. The prominence of *La Familia* within Beitar Jerusalem highlights how supporter culture in Israel has become a platform for racist extremism, one that directly feeds into and legitimises state-led militarism. Far from being marginal, Beitar's identity as the "team of the right" and its ultras' reputation for violence illustrate how sport and politics are deeply intertwined, with football used as a vehicle for normalising apartheid, settler colonialism, and ethnic cleansing.

Maccabi Tel Aviv

Maccabi Tel Aviv, Israel's most decorated and widely supported club, occupies a central place in the country's football culture — and with that prominence comes a powerful role in normalising racism and militarism. While not as notorious as Beitar Jerusalem, its supporters have nonetheless been deeply implicated in racist and extremist displays. Ultras groups associated with the club frequently chant anti-Arab slogans during matches, turning stadiums into arenas of incitement rather than spaces of inclusion. Beyond verbal abuse, Maccabi Tel Aviv supporters have also been at the forefront of celebrating soldiers involved in the occupation, treating them as "heroes" and embedding the glorification of militarism directly into fan rituals.

This merging of football and the army is made visible through elaborate stadium choreographies, or tifos, that feature military insignias, nationalist slogans, and giant portraits of soldiers. These tifos collapse the line between sport and state violence, making the battlefield and the pitch part of the same symbolic space. For a club seen as Israel's "flagship team," with broad mainstream appeal, this militarisation of fan culture has a particularly insidious impact: it sends the message that genocide, occupation, and war crimes are not only acceptable but worthy of celebration on the largest stages of Israeli football. Maccabi Tel Aviv's status as the establishment club means that the incorporation of racism and militarism into its supporter culture normalises these practices far beyond the terraces, reinforcing them in the heart of Israeli civic identity.

Hapoel Clubs

Historically, Hapoel Tel Aviv and other Hapoel clubs were linked to the socialist and labor movements, projecting a more “progressive” or “left-wing” image in contrast to the openly fascist profile of Beitar Jerusalem. Their supporter bases included workers’ unions and, at times, displayed banners referencing socialist or anti-fascist imagery. However, this legacy has not prevented Hapoel ultras from adopting strong nationalist elements in recent decades. Supporter groups have increasingly embraced militaristic imagery, waving banners that celebrate Israeli soldiers and their role in Gaza. While not as explicitly racist as *La Familia*, these practices reveal that nationalism and militarism permeate even clubs with a supposed progressive tradition. The Hapoel case shows that the integration of supporter culture into state violence is not limited to far-right clubs but is systemic across the Israeli football landscape. Even teams that brand themselves as “leftist” or “liberal” contribute to the cultural infrastructure that legitimises ethnic cleansing, occupation, and genocide.

Banners & Tifos Across Israeli Football

Racist banners and violent tifos are a recurring feature across Israeli stadiums, reflecting how visual culture in football is harnessed as a weapon of incitement and propaganda. These spectacles are not incidental outbursts but organised, choreographed displays supported by ultras groups, often tolerated or ignored by club management and authorities. Beitar Jerusalem supporters have repeatedly unveiled degrading caricatures of Arabs, including banners depicting Arab men in sexual positions with animals — grotesque attempts at dehumanisation that echo colonial stereotypes and feed genocidal ideology. Maccabi Tel Aviv ultras, on the other hand, have filled stadiums with massive tifos portraying Israeli soldiers as national heroes, directly glorifying the military campaigns in Gaza and collapsing the line between sport and state violence. These choreographies serve a dual function: on the one hand, they intimidate Palestinian and Arab players, sending a clear message that the stadium is a hostile, exclusionary space; on the other, they glorify the fusion of sport, militarism, and racial supremacy, ensuring that each match becomes a ritual of nationalist indoctrination. By filling terraces with images of soldiers and racist caricatures, Israeli ultras transform stadiums into arenas where genocide is celebrated, normalised, and passed down to younger generations of fans.

2. Violence Abroad: European Incidents

The extremist culture of Israeli football supporters has not remained confined within Israel’s borders. When Israeli clubs play in Europe, their ultras export the same racist chants, intimidation, and glorification of genocide that dominate their home stadiums. These incidents reveal how football becomes an extension of Zionist extremism abroad, threatening Arab communities and pro-Palestinian voices in Europe.

Amsterdam (November 2024)

During a UEFA Europa League match between Ajax Amsterdam and Maccabi Tel Aviv, hundreds of Israeli supporters travelled to the Dutch capital. What unfolded was not limited to fan enthusiasm around football but rather the **export of Israeli stadium extremism into**

European streets. Instead of confining their activity to the arena, groups of Maccabi ultras launched a campaign of intimidation across the city.

Arab residents were singled out, verbally harassed with racist abuse, and in several cases physically assaulted. Shops and homes in migrant-heavy neighbourhoods that displayed Palestinian flags or signs of solidarity were attacked; flags were torn down and replaced with Israeli banners and graffiti. In the central squares of Amsterdam, groups of fans chanted slogans such as “*No children left in Gaza*,” explicitly celebrating the ongoing genocide. This slogan, which openly calls for the extermination of Palestinian children, demonstrates the extent to which genocidal rhetoric is now normalized in Israeli supporter culture — and how it is performed proudly in European public space.

The Hind Rajab Foundation documented these events through testimonies, photographs, and video evidence. A formal complaint was filed with Dutch authorities, demanding accountability for the violence and incitement. Yet the initial response of the police was to dismiss the case, claiming that “evidence had been lost.” This dismissal reflected a broader reluctance among European institutions to confront Israeli extremism, even when it manifests as open incitement to genocide.

However, weeks later, new images and video recordings of the incidents resurfaced, contradicting the police’s claim of lost evidence. On this basis, HRF refiled the complaint, exposing not only the violence of the Israeli fans but also the institutional bias and hesitation that shielded them from scrutiny. The Amsterdam case thus revealed a double failure: the violent aggression of Israeli ultras abroad, and the unwillingness of European authorities to apply the same standards of accountability to them as they would to other extremist groups.

Far from being an isolated incident, Amsterdam demonstrated that **Israeli football supporter culture is a transnational threat**. The same chants, hate slogans, and glorification of genocide that dominate the terraces in Israel were reproduced in the heart of Europe, targeting Arab communities and silencing pro-Palestinian voices. Football became the cover under which Zionist extremism could operate in European public space, threatening not only Palestinians but the integrity of European society itself.

Other Incidents Across Europe

The events in Amsterdam were not an isolated outburst but part of a wider pattern in which Israeli football ultras export their ideology of hate to European cities. Whenever Israeli teams travel abroad, the stadium becomes only one arena of activity; the streets surrounding it often transform into stages for intimidation, harassment, and political confrontation.

In several European cities hosting **Beitar Jerusalem**, supporters carried the same racist slogans they chant weekly in Jerusalem. Chants of “*Death to Arabs*” and “*Beitar forever pure*” have been heard not only in Israel but also in European capitals, where local Arab and Muslim communities became direct targets of racist incitement. These incidents underline that Beitar’s *La Familia* ultras are not a domestic anomaly but a transnational threat, prepared to reproduce their fascist culture abroad.

Similarly, **Maccabi Tel Aviv fans** have harassed pro-Palestinian demonstrators in multiple countries. Outside stadiums and during protests, they waved Israeli flags and mocked the suffering in Gaza with chants that celebrated the bombing of civilians. In some cases,

Maccabi ultras filmed themselves taunting activists and uploaded the videos online, spreading intimidation further through digital channels. Their actions highlight how sport is weaponised not to build bridges but to humiliate Palestinians and silence solidarity movements abroad.

In a number of these incidents, ultras have not acted alone. Evidence shows that they often coordinate with **local Zionist organisations and networks**, turning football matches into political flashpoints. Rather than arriving simply as supporters, these groups mobilise alongside embassies and lobbying structures, ensuring that the presence of Israeli clubs becomes a platform for nationalist propaganda. Under this model, sport becomes a convenient cover for racial violence, intimidation, and the glorification of genocide in the very heart of Europe.

Taken together, these incidents show that Israeli supporter extremism is **systemic and exportable**. Whether in Amsterdam, Paris, Brussels, or elsewhere, the same pattern repeats: football is instrumentalised to spread Zionist extremism, threaten Arab communities, and attack pro-Palestinian voices. This is not simply hooliganism — it is the transnational extension of a genocidal culture rooted in Israeli stadiums and carried abroad under the guise of sport.

3. Exhibits: Football as a Tool of Genocidal Propaganda

The following exhibits document how Israeli soldiers systematically instrumentalise football supporter culture as part of the genocide in Gaza and across the region. These are not isolated images of “fan pride,” but deliberate acts of humiliation, domination, and incitement in which symbols of sport are deployed to glorify destruction and mock Palestinian suffering.

Flags, scarves, shirts, tifos, graffiti, and social media posts are repurposed as tools of conquest. Soldiers plant Beitar, Maccabi, Hapoel, and Hapoel Haifa flags in the ruins of Palestinian homes, dedicate killings to their clubs, tag neighbourhood walls with ultras slogans, and pose for selfies that are then celebrated by online supporter networks. Stadium culture and battlefield atrocity merge seamlessly, collapsing the distinction between sport and state violence.

By turning demolished homes into stages for fan rituals and reframing massacres as “away wins,” soldiers convert war crimes into consumable supporter content. What emerges is a **systemic pattern** — across clubs, across fronts (Gaza, Lebanon, Syria), and across mediums — where football becomes an extension of Israel’s genocidal project.

The exhibits that follow illustrate this phenomenon in detail. Each image is presented with analysis, showing how the symbols of Israeli football and wider sports culture are weaponised to normalise ethnic cleansing, glorify militarism, and transform genocide into popular culture.

Photographic Evidence: Exhibits & Analysis

Exhibit 1: Beitar Jerusalem Flag in Gaza



An Israeli soldier smiles while holding a Beitar Jerusalem flag in front of the ruins of Gaza, transforming a scene of mass destruction into a grotesque victory pose. The use of the club's emblem — historically associated with the far-right *La Familia* ultras, notorious for chants of “*Death to Arabs*” and violent assaults on Palestinians — merges extremist supporter culture with state-led genocide. By planting Beitar's symbols in Gaza's rubble, the soldier frames the annihilation of Palestinian life as if it were a football triumph, mocking the displaced and celebrating their suffering as part of a fan rivalry. This act illustrates how the genocidal project is not only executed militarily but also culturally, with football identity mobilised to normalise ethnic cleansing and humiliation.

Exhibit 2: Beitar Jerusalem Flag Shared on Instagram



Posted from Khan Yunis, this Instagram photo shows an Israeli soldier proudly holding the Beitar Jerusalem flag. The caption explicitly thanks *La Familia*, the club's most notorious ultras group, known internationally for racist chants such as “*Death to Arabs*” and for violent attacks on Palestinians, Black players, and even their own management when attempts were made to sign Muslim athletes.

By thanking *La Familia* directly, this soldier's Instagram post **collapses the distinction between the Israeli military and fascist supporter culture**. The genocidal destruction of Khan Yunis is reframed as an act of *La Familia*, celebrated in the same spirit as a football victory.

Exhibit 3: Maccabi Netanya “Away Days in Gaza”



An Israeli soldier sits in Khan Yunis with a Maccabi Netanya flag displayed behind him. The caption reads: “*Something about away days in Gaza. Netanya forever 💎.*” The genocidal assault is trivialised as if it were a football away match, mocking Palestinian suffering by framing military conquest in the language of fan rivalry. Maccabi Netanya, known as the “Diamond Club,” has a supporter base called the “Diamond Army” that frequently uses militaristic imagery and nationalist slogans. While not as notorious as Beitar Jerusalem’s *La Familia*, Netanya supporters have also been linked to anti-Arab chants and public displays of solidarity with soldiers during Gaza assaults. The soldier’s use of “away days” — a term normally describing fans travelling to rival stadiums —

shows how deeply football culture is instrumentalised in genocide: Palestinian cities are reduced to “stadiums” to be conquered, their destruction reframed as sporting victory. This proves that the fusion of supporter identity with genocidal propaganda is not limited to extremist clubs but runs through the entire fabric of Israeli football culture.

Exhibit 4: Hapoel Tel Aviv Flag in Khan Yunis



A soldier holds a Hapoel Tel Aviv/Israeli flag from a balcony overlooking the destroyed city of Khan Yunis, captioned “*Once again we are here,*” framing repeated genocidal assaults as if they were football fixtures. Hapoel Tel Aviv, historically associated with the Israeli labor movement, has long been portrayed as a “left-wing” club in contrast to Beitar Jerusalem’s openly fascist profile, with supporters drawing on union traditions and occasionally displaying socialist or anti-fascist imagery. Yet this supposed progressive legacy does not prevent its fan culture from being mobilised in genocidal propaganda, as the flag in Khan Yunis proves: nationalism overrides ideological labels, and even clubs seen as “leftist” are implicated in celebrating the destruction of

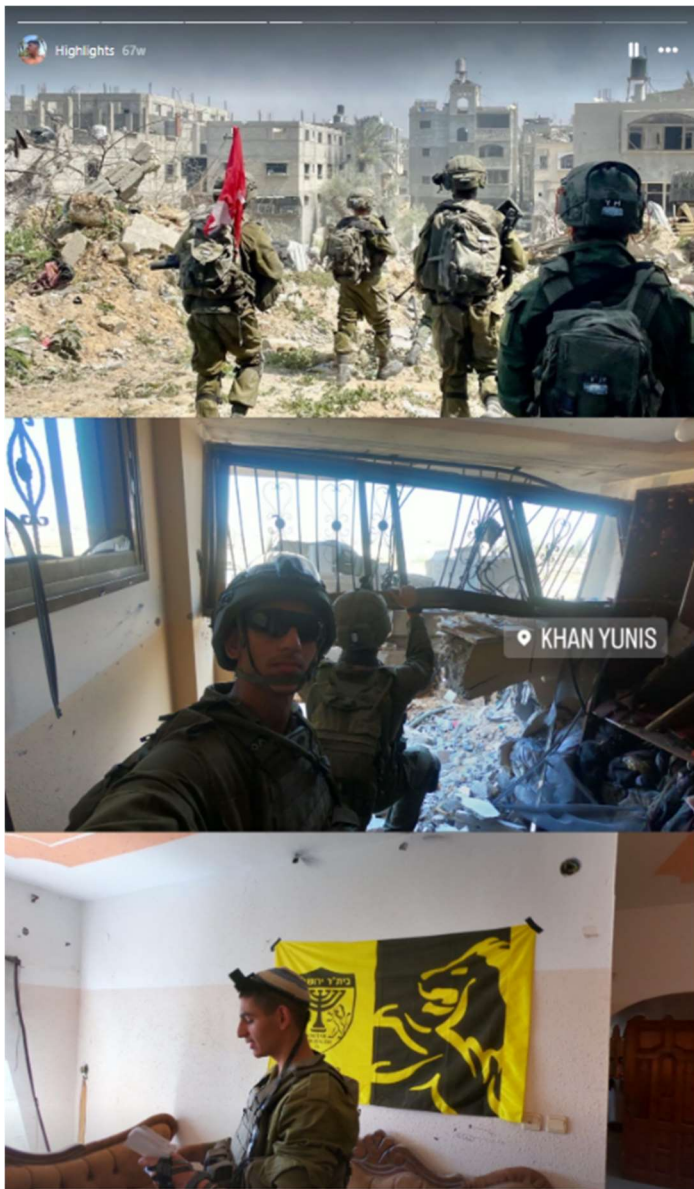
Palestinian life. This underscores the systemic nature of the phenomenon — across the Israeli football spectrum, from far-right to left-leaning clubs, sport is weaponised to normalise genocide.

Exhibit 5: Hapoel Haifa Flag on Tank



A Hapoel Haifa flag flies on an Israeli armored vehicle in Gaza, replacing what would normally be a military insignia and turning the war machine into a billboard for supporter propaganda. Hapoel Haifa, a club with a mixed Jewish and Arab supporter base and a history less stained by extremist notoriety than Beitar Jerusalem, is nonetheless drawn into the same pattern when its symbols are deployed in the context of genocide. By attaching the flag to a tank, soldiers reframe war crimes as an “away win,” mocking Palestinian suffering and trivialising destruction through football language. This image demonstrates that the phenomenon is not restricted to clubs with racist reputations but permeates the entire landscape of Israeli football, where even clubs with more “moderate” or “mixed” identities are weaponised in service of humiliation and conquest.

'Exhibit 6: Beitar Jerusalem Flag in Palestinian Home



Israeli soldiers hang a Beitar Jerusalem/La Familia flag inside a destroyed Palestinian family home in Khan Yunis, desecrating civilian property and humiliating displaced residents by stamping their living room with racist ultras imagery. The accompanying social media post includes additional images of destruction treated as trophies, turning the ruins of Palestinian life into a stage for fan celebration. Beitar Jerusalem's *La Familia*, infamous for fascist chants of "Death to Arabs" and violent assaults on Palestinians, becomes symbolically present inside the wreckage, collapsing the boundary between racist supporter culture and genocidal military operations. This act illustrates how soldiers instrumentalise ultras symbols not only as personal identity but as deliberate tools of psychological warfare, mocking victims by claiming their homes as conquered territory.

Exhibit 7: Beitar Jerusalem Scarf, Thanking La Familia



An Israeli soldier poses with a Beitar Jerusalem scarf raised above his head, posting an Instagram caption that explicitly thanks both the IDF and *La Familia*. This image openly merges the Israeli military with one of the most racist and violent ultras groups in world football, notorious for chanting “Death to Arabs,” carrying out assaults on Palestinians, and firebombing their own club offices when Muslim players were signed. By crediting *La Familia* alongside the army, the soldier signals that genocidal operations in Gaza are celebrated not just as national victories but as extensions of supporter culture, normalising war crimes as if they were goals scored on the pitch. This fusion of military power and ultras extremism illustrates how deeply embedded football culture has become in the propaganda of genocide.

Exhibit 8: Maccabi Tel Aviv Scarf in Lebanon



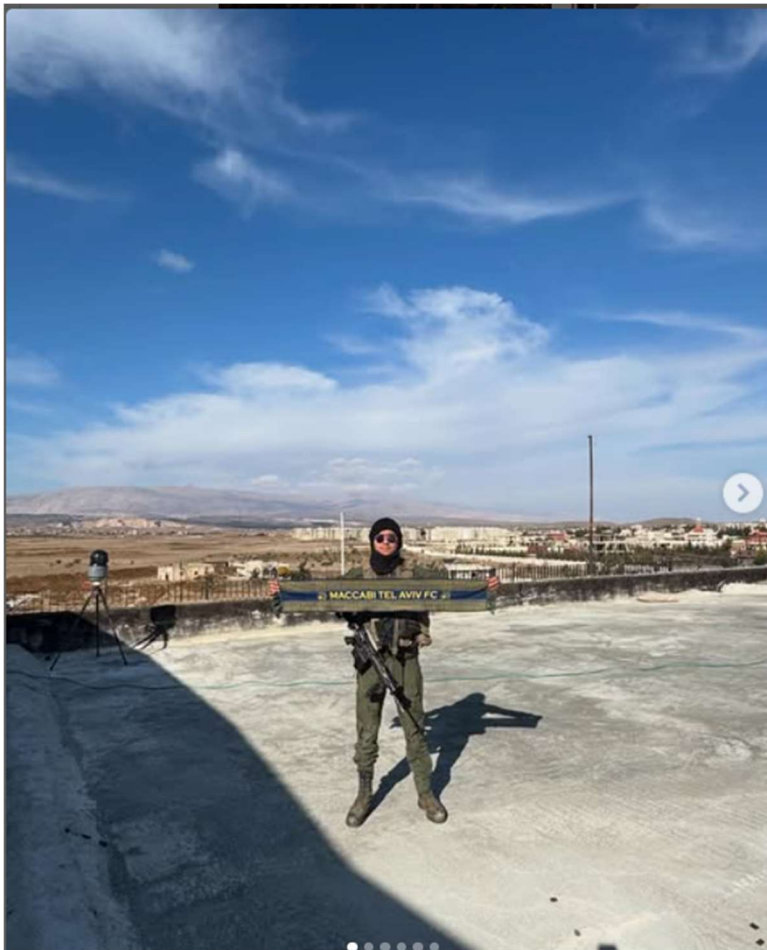
A soldier poses inside a Lebanese civilian bedroom holding a Maccabi Tel Aviv scarf, with household furniture and personal belongings clearly visible in the background. This act desecrates a private home, mocking its absent residents by transforming their intimate space into a propaganda stage for genocidal militarism and supporter culture. Maccabi Tel Aviv, Israel's most decorated club and often portrayed as its "flagship team," has a large and influential fan base whose ultras frequently glorify soldiers and chant anti-Arab slogans. The presence of its symbols in occupied Lebanon demonstrates how even Israel's mainstream clubs are weaponised by soldiers to celebrate domination, reducing Arab homes to backdrops for fan rituals that merge football identity with the humiliation of civilians.

Exhibit 9: Maccabi Tel Aviv Shirt in Gaza Ruins



Smiling amid the rubble of Gaza, an Israeli soldier holds up a yellow Maccabi Tel Aviv football shirt, reframing mass destruction as a victory celebration. The use of one of Israel's most iconic clubs — with a vast supporter base and a reputation as the “establishment team” of Tel Aviv — underscores how mainstream football identity is co-opted to normalise genocide. What should be a symbol of sport and civic pride is instead turned into a trophy of war, mocking Palestinians who have lost their homes and families. This act trivialises atrocity by presenting it in the familiar language of fan triumph, showing how soldiers collapse the line between military conquest and football fandom to propagate humiliation and domination.

Exhibit 10: Maccabi Tel Aviv Scarf in Syria



A soldier stands in uniform holding a Maccabi Tel Aviv scarf, with the post geotagged in Syria and captioned “*An unusual Saturday.*” By equating regional militarism with the casual rituals of match day, the soldier trivialises acts of aggression and occupation, treating them as if they were part of a football calendar. Maccabi Tel Aviv, often celebrated as Israel’s flagship club, thus becomes a cultural vehicle for normalising military expansion beyond Gaza, extending the same fusion of sport and conquest into Lebanon and Syria. The imagery reinforces how soldiers instrumentalise fan symbols to frame acts of war as harmless entertainment, collapsing international crimes into the language of supporter loyalty and weekend leisure.

Exhibit 11: Maccabi Tel Aviv Stadium Tifo Glorifying Soldiers



Maccabi Tel Aviv supporters unveil a massive stadium tifo depicting an Israeli soldier, accompanied by nationalist slogans and choreographed yellow streamers that filled the stands in coordinated display. The spectacle glorifies militarism directly inside the

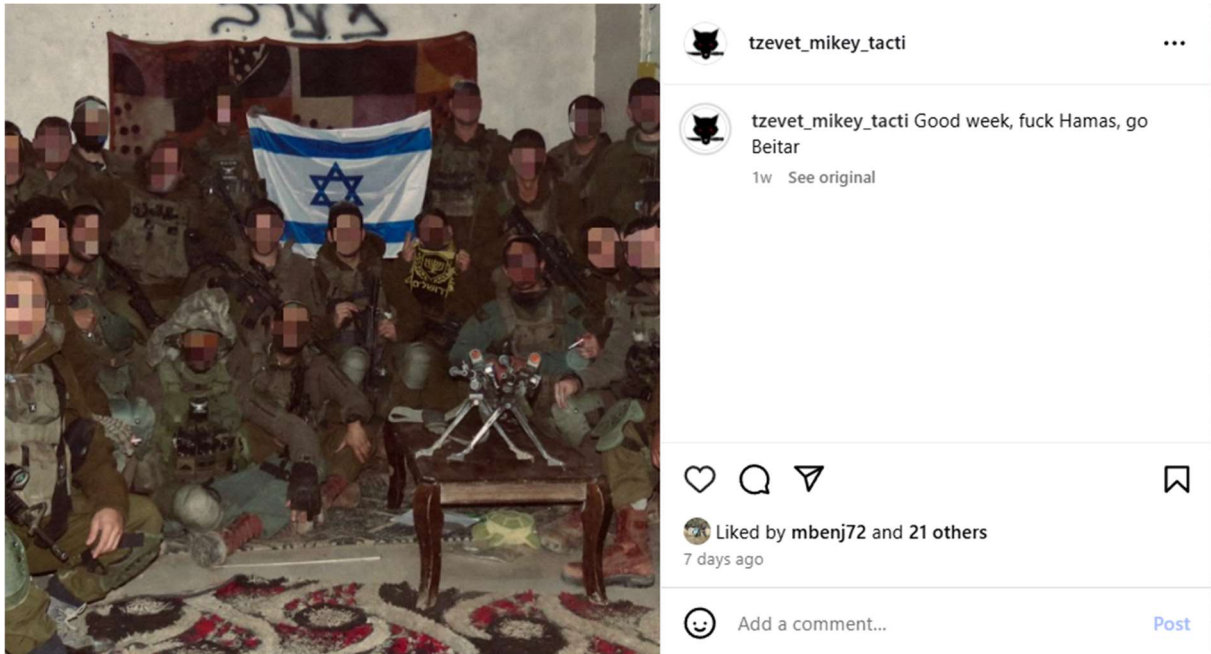
football arena, transforming a space meant for sport into one of nationalist propaganda. Maccabi Tel Aviv, Israel's most decorated and widely supported club, here demonstrates how even mainstream teams actively celebrate soldiers as icons of war, collapsing the boundary between sport and genocide. Such choreographies not only normalise the ongoing massacres in Gaza but also socialize younger fans into viewing military violence as a source of pride and unity, embedding genocide into the cultural fabric of Israeli football.

Exhibit 12: Racist Banner in Beitar Jerusalem Stands



Beitar Jerusalem ultras display a racist banner depicting an Arab man in a degrading sexual caricature with a goat, a form of dehumanisation designed to ridicule and vilify Palestinians. Such imagery reflects the deep-rooted racism embedded in Israeli stadium culture, where Arabs are regularly targeted with chants of “Death to Arabs” and portrayed as subhuman. This banner is not an isolated act of hooliganism but part of a long-standing tradition within Beitar's *La Familia* ultras, who openly embrace fascist and supremacist ideology. By projecting this hatred in stadiums, Beitar supporters create the cultural environment that legitimises and fuels genocidal violence, with soldiers later carrying the same symbols into Gaza to mark destroyed homes and humiliate displaced families. The stadium thus becomes both a breeding ground and a megaphone for the genocidal ideology exported to the battlefield.

Exhibit 13 – Group of Soldiers with Beitar Jerusalem Symbol in Palestinian Home



A large group of Israeli soldiers pose inside a Palestinian home with an Israeli flag pinned on the wall, while one soldier prominently displays a Beitar Jerusalem item, directly linking the unit to the club's racist ultras culture. The Instagram caption, "*Good week, fuck Hamas, go Beitar,*" merges genocidal rhetoric, football supporter identity, and military occupation into a single act of propaganda. Beitar Jerusalem's *La Familia* ultras are infamous for fascist slogans and violence against Arabs, and here their symbols are carried into the heart of a Palestinian family's destroyed home, turning it into a stage for humiliation. This image illustrates the fusion of military conquest with supporter extremism, where genocide is not only executed on the ground but also framed as a football rivalry to be won and celebrated.

Exhibit 14 – Soldiers Displaying Beitar Jerusalem Flag in a Seized Home



A group of Israeli soldiers occupy a Palestinian home, lounging on mattresses while one soldier holds up a Beitar Jerusalem/Israeli flag. The Instagram story is captioned “*mi casa es tu casa*” (“my house is your house”), mocking the displacement of Palestinians by presenting the seized property as their own. This act fuses militarism, supporter culture, and deliberate humiliation: the home of an expelled family is reframed as a conquered “stadium” where soldiers display racist ultras symbols. The use of a Beitar Jerusalem flag — tied to the *La Familia* ultras, notorious for chants of “Death to Arabs” — amplifies the psychological violence, reducing the trauma of forced displacement into a fan celebration. Crucially, this display reflects a broader pattern of **ethnic cleansing and settler-colonial land grabs** that mark Israel’s policies both in historic Palestine and in Gaza, where homes are expropriated, neighbourhoods erased, and entire communities displaced. By turning seized Palestinian property into propaganda stages, soldiers not only continue the project of ethnic cleansing but also glorify it as part of football culture, reinforcing the systemic link between genocide, settler colonialism, and supporter extremism.

4. Systemic Nature of the Phenomenon

The documentation collected by the Hind Rajab Foundation (HRF) demonstrates beyond doubt that the merging of sport and genocide in Israel is not the result of a few rogue soldiers or fringe ultras groups. It is a **systemic cultural phenomenon** that spans clubs, geographies, and forms of expression. The scale, consistency, and repetition of these acts prove that they are part of a deeply rooted pattern in Israeli society.

Across Clubs

The evidence implicates a wide range of Israeli clubs, from those notorious for racism to those historically considered “mainstream” or even “progressive”:

- **Beitar Jerusalem** stands out as the most infamous, with its *La Familia* ultras synonymous with fascist chants, racist violence, and open incitement to ethnic cleansing. Soldiers proudly carry Beitar flags and scarves into Gaza, directly importing this culture of hate into occupied and destroyed Palestinian spaces.
- **Maccabi Tel Aviv**, Israel’s most decorated and widely supported club, represents the “mainstreaming” of this phenomenon. Its flags and shirts are brandished in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria, while its ultras glorify soldiers inside stadiums, showing that genocide is normalised within the core of Israeli football.
- **Hapoel Tel Aviv**, historically associated with the labor movement and often described as a “left-wing” club, is also implicated. Soldiers hold its flag in Khan Yunis, showing that nationalist militarism cuts across ideological divides, and that even supposed “progressive” clubs are weaponised in genocidal propaganda.
- **Maccabi Netanya** and **Hapoel Haifa** further prove the systemic nature: their flags and slogans appear on tanks and in selfies from Gaza, trivialising war crimes as football victories.

Across Arenas

The geographical spread of the evidence also underscores its systemic nature:

- **In Gaza**, soldiers plant ultras flags in demolished neighbourhoods, hang Beitar banners in family homes, and dedicate destruction to their clubs, mocking Palestinians forced into displacement.
- **In Lebanon and Syria**, soldiers replicate the same acts, posing with Maccabi Tel Aviv scarves in seized civilian homes or on deployment, trivialising regional militarism as if it were a football away match.
- **Inside Israeli stadiums**, tifos glorifying soldiers and racist banners mocking Arabs serve as the cultural foundation for what later plays out in the field of genocide. The terraces act as rehearsal spaces for militarism and racial hatred, which are then carried into warzones.

Across Forms

The phenomenon manifests in multiple symbolic forms, all reinforcing one another:

- **Flags and scarves** are displayed in ruins and occupied homes, signalling victory and humiliation.
 - **Graffiti and ultras tags** are sprayed onto Palestinian property, transforming acts of destruction into symbolic fan conquests.
 - **Tifos and banners** inside stadiums glorify soldiers as heroes and ridicule Arabs, embedding militarism and racism in supporter culture.
 - **Racist caricatures** dehumanise Palestinians, feeding the genocidal ideology that justifies mass killings and expulsions.
 - **Selfies and Instagram captions** explicitly merge football rivalry language with genocidal rhetoric, broadcasting it to thousands of supporters online.
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Taken together, this body of evidence demonstrates that the relationship between Israeli sport and genocide is **structural, not incidental**. It is not limited to one club, one warzone, or one group of extremists, but runs through the mainstream of Israeli sports culture. Soldiers and ultras alike participate in the same ecosystem of militarism, racism, and humiliation, where genocide is celebrated as a “victory” in a season of endless fixtures.

This systemic integration mirrors the broader logic of **Israeli settler colonialism**, where football culture, like other social institutions, is mobilised in support of land grabs, home demolitions, and the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. Just as homes in Gaza are destroyed and repurposed as sites of propaganda, stadiums in Israel are transformed into arenas of militarist indoctrination, where children grow up chanting for soldiers and mocking Palestinians as enemies to be conquered.

In short: **this is not about sport as entertainment — it is about sport as a cog in the machinery of genocide.**

6. Implications & Advocacy

The instrumentalisation of sports in genocide carries profound implications for law, advocacy, and international policy. What the Hind Rajab Foundation (HRF) has documented is not only a cultural phenomenon but also a legal and political one that demands action.

Legal Implications

The use of football and sports symbols in the context of mass violence constitutes more than propaganda — it is part of the genocidal project itself:

- **Degrading Treatment:** By hanging club flags in destroyed Palestinian homes, soldiers inflict psychological harm and humiliation on displaced families, a violation of international humanitarian law.

- **Incitement to Genocide:** Racist banners, ultras chants of “*Death to Arabs*,” and soldiers dedicating destruction to their clubs amount to direct incitement, prohibited under the Genocide Convention.
- **Propaganda of Genocide:** The systematic circulation of selfies, tifos, and dedications online transforms genocide into consumable fan culture, which serves to normalise and propagate genocidal ideology.
These acts, when taken together, reinforce the legal case that genocide is not only being committed militarily but also celebrated, amplified, and justified through sport — an aggravating factor under international law.

Advocacy Implications

The evidence strengthens the urgent call for Israel’s exclusion from international sporting bodies. Sport is often described as a neutral field for dialogue and coexistence, but the Israeli case demonstrates the opposite:

- Stadiums and supporter groups are engines of militarism and hate.
- Soldiers use sport as propaganda to legitimise war crimes.
- The entire ecosystem of Israeli sport functions as a cultural arm of the genocidal machine.

For advocacy, this means that **sports are not a separate or apolitical sphere — they are directly implicated in human rights violations.** Campaigns for accountability must therefore target sporting institutions with the same urgency as political and economic ones.

Campaigning for Sanctions: Game Over Israel

The Hind Rajab Foundation actively supports the **Game Over Israel** campaign, which demands that Israel be suspended from FIFA, UEFA, and all international sporting federations until the genocide ends and accountability is enforced. Sport is not neutral. To allow Israel to participate in international competitions while it carries out genocide against Palestinians is to grant it legitimacy and normalisation — turning football into another cog in the machinery of oppression.

Precedent: Apartheid South Africa

History offers a clear precedent. Apartheid South Africa was banned from international sport for decades, with FIFA suspending its membership in 1961 and expelling it in 1976. The international sporting boycott was one of the most effective tools in isolating the apartheid regime, recognising that participation in world sport gave it the appearance of normality while it enforced racial supremacy. South African players and fans were excluded not because of their sporting abilities, but because the system they represented was incompatible with the principles of equality, dignity, and fair play.

Parity and Beyond: Israel as a Settler-Colonial, Genocidal Regime

Israel today not only reproduces but in many ways **exceeds the crimes of apartheid South Africa.** Its regime combines:

- **Ethnic Cleansing:** The forced displacement of Palestinians from their homes in Gaza and the West Bank, and the systematic erasure of Palestinian presence through violence and coercion.
- **Settler Colonialism:** The seizure of Palestinian land and homes, the establishment of settlements, and the appropriation of resources under the logic of permanent domination.
- **Genocide:** The mass killing of civilians, destruction of entire neighbourhoods, and deliberate targeting of the conditions of life of the Palestinian people in Gaza.

Allowing Israel to continue to play in UEFA and FIFA competitions while carrying out such crimes is indefensible. It sends the message that mass atrocities can coexist with international legitimacy, undermining both the principles of sport and the authority of international law.

Urgency: The Normalisation of Genocide through Sport

Every match Israel plays in UEFA or FIFA competitions is a propaganda victory. It enables Israel to present itself as a “normal” member of the international community, while in reality it commits atrocities against millions of Palestinians. Sporting participation serves as a form of whitewashing: stadiums in Europe host Israeli flags and anthems even as Palestinian homes are bombed, families displaced, and children killed. This normalisation deepens Palestinian marginalisation and erodes global accountability.

Contemporary Example: Russia and Ukraine

The case of **Russia after its invasion of Ukraine** proves that the international community can act swiftly when political will exists. Within weeks of the February 2022 invasion, FIFA and UEFA suspended Russia from all international competitions, recognising that a country engaged in aggression and violations of international law could not be allowed to participate in world sport. This response was immediate and uncompromising. Yet Israel, despite carrying out mass atrocities and openly defying international law, continues to play in European competitions without sanction. The double standard is glaring: Palestinians are told that their lives and suffering do not count as much as Ukrainians’, and Israel is shielded from accountability.

The demand of the **Game Over Israel** campaign is therefore urgent and undeniable: if apartheid South Africa was banned, and if Russia was suspended within weeks of invading Ukraine, then Israel — committing genocide, ethnic cleansing, and settler colonialism on an even larger scale — must face at least the same consequences. Exclusion from international sport is not symbolic; it is a necessary act of accountability and a powerful form of pressure.

Football and genocide cannot coexist.

7. Conclusion

Football should be a force that unites people across borders, cultures, and histories. It should represent fair play, mutual respect, and the joy of collective experience. Yet in Israel, football has been transformed into something very different: a **tool of incitement, humiliation, and genocidal propaganda**. Soldiers plant Beitar Jerusalem flags in destroyed Palestinian homes, wave Maccabi Tel Aviv scarves in occupied Lebanese bedrooms, and dedicate the levelling of entire neighbourhoods to their clubs. Meanwhile, ultras in Israeli stadiums unveil tifos glorifying soldiers, chant racist slogans, and display degrading caricatures of Arabs. The terraces and the battlefield are bound together in a single continuum of hate.

This is not coincidence, nor is it the work of a few “bad apples.” It is **systemic**. The evidence gathered by the Hind Rajab Foundation shows that across clubs — Beitar, Maccabi, Hapoel, Netanya, Haifa— and across arenas — Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and Israeli stadiums — sport has been weaponised as a cog in the machinery of genocide. Symbols that should represent play, community, and competition are instead turned into trophies of conquest and humiliation.

These practices cannot be separated from the wider project of **Israeli settler colonialism**. Just as homes are expropriated, land is seized, and entire communities are driven from their neighbourhoods, so too are Palestinian living rooms, walls, and ruins repurposed into stages for supporter culture. Soldiers do not simply destroy — they mark, tag, and dedicate the destruction, claiming it as part of a fan rivalry. Genocide is trivialised as an “away win,” and ethnic cleansing is reframed as a season fixture.

The implications are clear. Israel cannot be permitted to compete in international sport while it uses football and other supporter cultures to celebrate, legitimise, and normalise genocide. Every time Israel steps onto a pitch under FIFA or UEFA banners, it gains propaganda value, presenting itself as a normal member of the international community while committing mass atrocities. Just as apartheid South Africa was banned from world sport, and just as Russia was suspended after its invasion of Ukraine, so too must Israel be excluded until the genocide ends and perpetrators face accountability.

The **Hind Rajab Foundation** will continue to document, file cases, and expose this reality, working alongside global partners in the **Game Over Israel** campaign to bring about the sporting isolation of Israel as part of the broader struggle for justice.

Football and genocide cannot coexist.