

# BAN! ISDS!

## an Israeli symbol of crimes against the Palestinian and Latin American people

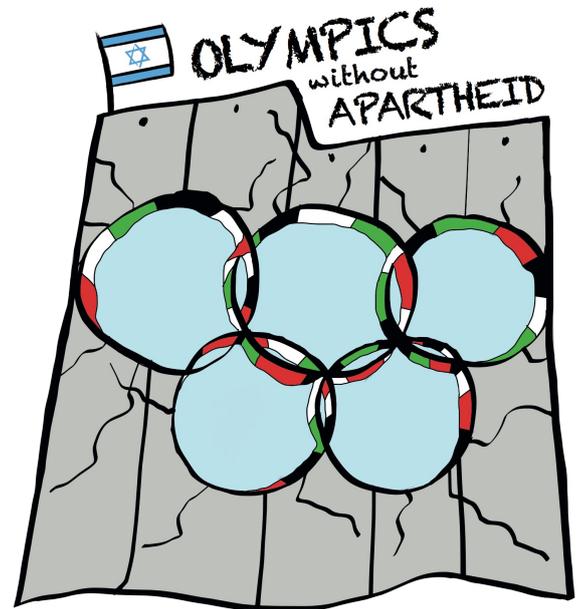
Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign  
www.stopthewall.org

August 2015

### JOIN IN: OLYMPICS WITHOUT APARTHEID!

The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) has called for this campaign for ISDS and other companies complicit with Israeli apartheid to be banned from the Olympics, for pressure until the Olympics will be free of apartheid.

Check the facebook page 'Olympics without Apartheid': <http://on.fb.me/10Qfjmk>



#### Rio 2016 and ISDS – a first victory

*Pressured by over 30 Brazilian civil society organizations, the Brazilian government distanced itself from the company and has therefore foreclosed the leading role of ISDS prospected for itself during the Rio 16 Olympics.*

#### Operations and 'experiences' in Latin America

*ISDS is widely accused of having trained death squads in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua and appears in connection with the coups and attempted coups in Honduras and Venezuela.*

The Israeli company International Security and Defense Systems (ISDS) proudly claims to be founded by former Mossad agents<sup>1</sup>. While Israel perpetuates a regime of occupation, colonialism and apartheid against the Palestinian people, which includes torture, imprisonment without fair trial, systematic spying on civilians and extrajudicial killings, ISDS markets its connections to the Israeli military and its know how in repression across the world.

Yossi Melman explains the operation of this system in an article written for the Israeli newspaper Haaretz argues that the company is linked to the State of Israel and is part of the Israeli military intervention system. He explains: "The Defense Ministry, the Foreign

Ministry or the Mossad gets a request to provide security advice or to train army or security service forces for the ruler of a country, usually a tyrant. Because the authorities cannot, or do not want, to assist the ruler directly, although they view his request as important in order to promote security or political interests - they ask a private company to provide the service being requested."<sup>2</sup> According to Carl Fehlandt, a former arms dealer of ISDS in Guatemala between 1982 and 1986, "the Israeli government controls the ISDS and who calls the shots is the Minister of Defense."<sup>3</sup>



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# ISDS – a leader of crimes against human dignity

Founded in 1982, ISDS is proud of the fact that it was founded by former Mossad agents. The founder and director until today is Leo Gleser, a former colonel in the Special Antiterrorism Unit of the Israeli military<sup>4</sup>. Among the people with whom the ISDS worked in the past are reportedly figures like Gerard Lachtanian<sup>5</sup>, an Armenian weapons dealer cited, among others, for his involvement in the coup in Honduras in 1984; Yehuda Leitner and Emile Sa'ada, former members of the Israeli army, which many say have played a role in the Iran-Contra affair<sup>6</sup>, has as well been

working with ISDS. The foreign minister of ousted President of Honduras, Manuel Zelayas, connected Leo Gleser and his business friends with the weapons used against the Brazilian embassy, where he was taking refuge after the coup against his government, have been provided by ISDS<sup>7</sup>.

In a letter to the Guatemalan military, dated April 30 1985, Sammy Sapyr, then director of the Guatemalan office of ISDS, described the company's services as including anti-terrorism training, training anti-terrorism, "squads", electronic

surveillance and collection information as well as the sale of weapons such as helicopters and airplanes. He also offered a course on "selective terrorism" under the general rubric of "formation of the military"<sup>8</sup>.

ISDS specialized in arms deals as well as interrogation techniques and supervision of prisoners in Latin America; in the context of the dictatorships in which the ISDS operated, this necessarily implies involvement with the widespread practices of torture and illegal detention.

## ISDS' operations and 'experiences'

According to media reports, only in Latin America ISDS was involved at least in support of the following dictatorships and (attempted) coups:

- **Honduras:** Between 1981 and 1984, the ISDS trained in Honduras the bodyguards of President Roberto Suazo Cordoba as well as the personnel of General Gustavo Alvarez Martínez, head of the Armed Forces and promoter of the dirty war against the Honduran Left. The founder and director of ISDS, Leo Gleser, hired the former members of the IDF (Israeli army) Yehuda Leitner and Emile Sa'ada to help train members of the notorious "Battalion 316", the private death squad run by general Gustavo Alvarez Martinez.<sup>9</sup>

- **El Salvador:** Authorized by the Israeli government, ISDS has

provided instructors and sold military equipment to the government of El Salvador to form special units against the leftist guerrillas.<sup>10</sup>

- **Guatemala:** In addition to the presentation letter offering ISDS services to the Guatemalan military, which has been reported in the media, the same general Rios Montt told an ABC television reporter that the coup that brought him to power had been so successful "because many of our soldiers were trained by the Israelis".<sup>11</sup>

- **Ecuador:** Abdala Bucaram, ex-president of Ecuador, accused ISDS staff of involvement in kidnappings and interrogations them under torture.<sup>12</sup>

- **Nicaragua:** The Honduran General Walter López Reyes reported that the men of the

ISDS trained the Nicaraguan Contras in the military base of Tamara, near Tegucigalpa.<sup>13</sup>

- **Venezuela:** The ISDS has provided security services to Venezuelan oil companies shortly before the 2002 failed coup against President Hugo Chavez.<sup>14</sup>

- **Brazil:** ISDS is accused of having supplied weapons to Yehuda Leitner that were later used against the Brazilian embassy.<sup>15</sup>

- **Mexico:** In 1997, ISDS provided "antiterrorist" training to a special "urban intervention" unit of the Judicial Police, a force so detested for its brutality and corruption that it was later disbanded by Mexico's president.<sup>16</sup>

- **Peru:** In 2006, ISDS has been involved in a dodgy arms deal with Alva Castro.<sup>17</sup>



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## Rio 2016 and ISDS – a first victory

On 22 October the Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Rio 2016 announced a security contract with the Israeli company ISDS for the Olympic Games security and since then displays the logo of the ISDS on its website and, according to the media, will have an advertising space during the Rio2016 worth 20 million<sup>18</sup>.

ISDS at the time claimed that the contract affirmed the company as "integrator" of the entire security system (with a total expenditure of \$ 2.2 billion) and that ISDS is already working on plans for "security" and monitoring that will be implemented throughout the city during the Games<sup>19</sup>. ISDS announced it would train the security staff<sup>20</sup> and provide control equipment such as scanners and others. Vice President of ISDS Ron Shafran said that the ISDS will offer solutions to problems of "intelligence", "crowd control", security of large spaces, among others<sup>21</sup>. The ISDS vice president Ron Shafran also commented that "we already have teams that operate in Brazil, and acted unofficially

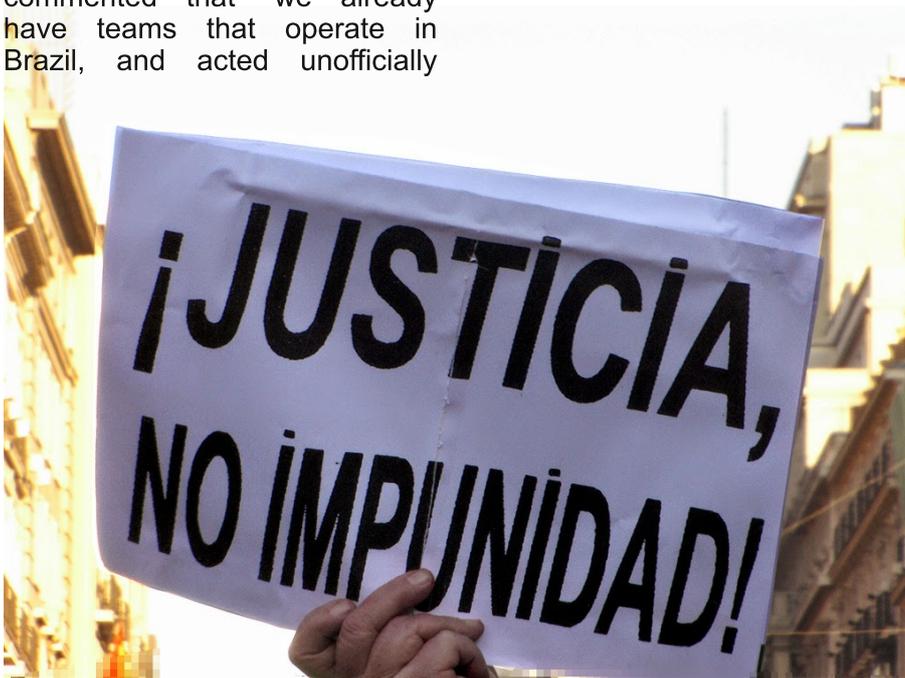
(sic!) there during the World Cup last summer"<sup>22</sup>.

In February, security of the Olympic Games was officially transferred to the COESRIO, presided by the Ministry of Justice/SESGE and integrated by the state and city security organs of Rio de Janeiro<sup>23</sup>. Pressured by over 30 Brazilian civil society organizations that urged in a joint letter the COERIO to exclude ISDS or other security companies involved in breaches of human rights and international law from contracts for the Olympic Games, the Ministry of Justice on April 8 declared that "there does not exist any commercial relation between the SESGE/Ministry of Justice and the repeatedly mentioned company [ISDS]"<sup>24</sup>. This distancing of the Ministry of Justice from the company has therefore foreclosed the leading role of ISDS prospected by the company in October 2014 and has brought the campaign for Olympics without Apartheid a first, partial victory.

### Justice... Not Impunity!

*Leo Gleser claims that he 'never broke the law'<sup>25</sup>. Considering the context his company has operated, this does not mean ISDS did not violate the most basic ethical standards and human principles as well as international law and human rights covenants.*

*The Olympics Committee argues that ISDS has passed their ethics procedure. For us, this does not certify ISDS' as an ethically acceptable company but proves the failure of the ethics procedures of the Olympics Organizing Committee.*



**"Justice - Not Impunity!" - A poster carried in a protest in El Salvador.**



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- (2) <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-cowboy-1.184214>
- (3) The 'Terrorism' Industry, Ed Herman and Gerry O'Sullivan, The "Terrorism" Industry, 1989, Praeger, pages 117-147, <http://bit.ly/1p4uYa>
- (4) [http://www.aviationtoday.com/bio\\_gleser.html](http://www.aviationtoday.com/bio_gleser.html) Leo Gleser is as well interviewed in the documentary "The Lab by Yotam Feldman, <http://www.gumfilms.com/projects/lab>
- (5) <http://www.centredelas.org/es/seguridad-y-defensa/2059-mercenaris-per-proteger-el-barca-3>
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- (7) Waynes Report affirms that ISD S provided the weapons while Patricia Rodas, foreign minister of Manuel Zelaya accused two Israeli companies of providing the weapons, Alfacom and Intercom. Both are owned by Yehuda Leitner, who is not only a business partner of Leo Gleser but appears to be owning as well ISDS Honduras. (<http://www.waynemadsenreport.com/articles/20090928> (information publicly available at: <http://bit.ly/1gdFQzn>, [http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view\\_all&address=405x22843](http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=405x22843), <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elmundo/4-132490-2009-09-27.html>, <http://whois.domaintools.com/alfacom.hn>)
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