



## [WikiLeaks Documents Uncover How Israeli Officials Have Coordinated with Top Hollywood Executives in an Attempt to Whitewash War Crimes and Human Rights Abuses](#)

Following Israel's heinous 2014 bombing of the Gaza Strip that left thousands dead and countless more without homes, WikiLeaks posted a horde of emails in 2015 dubbed the Sony Archive, which revealed a coordinated effort by high-flying Hollywood elites to push pro-Israel propaganda upon American, British, and European media. The revelations were unsettling, but did not come as a surprise to many social justice activists, who have long spoken about pro-Israeli biases in mainstream media. The importance of uncovering this and maintaining focus on the issue remain relevant, as Israel continues to violate international and human rights laws, from its persisting abuse of Palestinians to its recent provocative rhetoric during maritime border dispute negotiations with Lebanon. Social media, however, is starting to play a larger role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. There is video evidence of Israeli violations against Palestinians seemingly every day, and as social media coverage of the issue has become more prevalent, so too has the growing sentiment among Americans that Israel is in fact the oppressor.

On the other hand, Hollywood has not moved in the direction of supporting Palestine. Despite having a reputation for being a far-left institution, much of Hollywood remains staunchly pro-Israel, more than seven years after the Sony Archive was first leaked. The large email cache is certainly not lacking star power, containing names that include prominent executives and producers such as Ben Silverman of *The Office*, as well as actors Natalie Portman and Scarlett Johansson. The revelations uncovered that a group exchanged several emails prompting one another to "boycott the boycotters" of Israeli-related items and to leverage their connections at prominent film festivals, corporations, and other venues to prevent Israel's cancellation from popular culture. In a lengthy email resembling a call to arms, producer Ron Rotholz wrote to his peers that "what we can do is urge the leaders of major film, tv and theater organizations, festivals, markets and potentially the heads of media corporations to issue official statements condemning any form of cultural or economic boycotts against Israel." In an even more forcible statement, Rotholz later wrote that the group "must urge industry leaders in the U.S., U.K., and Europe to take an ABSOLUTE position regarding the legitimacy and continued security and support for the Jewish state and its population." Moreover, the words of the group were not merely grumblings and empty promises. Silverman, for example, attempted to shut down "The Death of Klinghoffer," an opera at the MET on the basis of being anti-Semitic. Additionally, participants in the email chain are paranoid that growing support for Palestine is an indication of a second Holocaust. In Ryan Kavanaugh's own words, "it is [their] job to keep another Holocaust from happening." Sadly, this email chain is not alone in its way of thinking. Creative Community for Peace (CCFP), founded in 2011, is another group of Hollywood stars dedicated to the protection of Israel's image. Signatories of their pro-Israel petition include Seth Rogen and Sylvester Stallone.

Over the years, Israeli propaganda has entered U.S. mainstream media under a variety of guises. When Israel first became a country in the late 1940s, it was portrayed as the lovable victim of Muslim aggressors. Later, it was viewed as an enviable, tough, unflinching powerhouse in the face of danger. As Israelis themselves have become more involved in the production of pro-Israel media in the U.S., it has also become more nuanced. In recent news, Marvel hero Sabra, an Israeli Mossad agent, will appear in the next Captain America movie. Outside of the world of movies and TV, American support for Israel has been drummed up by the use of Israeli military women as sex symbols. The concept of "hot Israeli army women" has an entire corner of the internet, and even a section on *Maxim's* website. At Israel's Defense, Homeland Security and Cyber Exhibition (ISDEF), a group known as Alpha Gun Angels has been known to make an appearance. The group consists of Israeli military women who pose in



# The NATIONAL INTEREST FOUNDATION

risqué clothing with guns in hand. Most posts were targeted towards an American audience, with hashtags referring to such things as the protection of second amendment rights. Their Instagram account is now defunct.

Despite the powerful pro-Israel crowd in Hollywood, there are those who have spoken out against Israel's transgressions and in support of Palestine. Actors Penélope Cruz and Javier Bardem came under fire for their signing of a letter condemning Israel's actions in Gaza and were even threatened with losing roles. Filmmaker Ken Loach also drew the ire of the pro-Israeli community in Hollywood by supporting a boycott of Israeli culture and sports. In response to his statement, Ryan Kavanaugh attempted to get the Cannes Film Festival cancelled, as one of Loach's films was a top contender to win. Clearly, those who back the Palestinian cause may continue to face serious repercussions in Hollywood. Nevertheless, Hollywood needs the support of the everyday American to thrive, and as public opinion continues to sway in support of Palestinian rights, Hollywood may soon find itself with a difficult decision to make.