

# War In Iraq

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## Saudi Internet campaign to boycott US firms over Gaza grows

By: AFP on: 12.01.2009 [14:59 ] (217 reads)

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Saudi Internet campaign to boycott US firms over Gaza grows

RIYADH, Jan 12, 2009 (AFP) - An Internet campaign in Saudi Arabia for a boycott of US businesses over Washington's support of the Israeli assault on Gaza gathered force Monday as a new website tied to a conservative cleric promoted the movement.

For days the calls to stop patronizing popular US brands like McDonalds, Pepsi, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Chili's have spread through viral emails and SMS messages, with no apparent sponsor or backer of the campaign.

Some singled out Starbucks and cigarette maker Philip Morris for allegedly supporting Israel, and called on Saudi consumers to stop buying their products.

"If you cannot donate money for Gaza, at least stop buying the products of these brands," said one email.

On Sunday a new website dedicated to promoting the boycott was launched with the support of prominent cleric Sheikh Awad al-Qarni, who was recently arrested for calling for attacks on Israelis everywhere after it launched its war on Gaza.

The website asked people to stay away from US brands until Israel stops its attacks and opens all border crossings for the territory.

"Let our enemy see we can teach them a hard lesson," it said.

Many Saudis said they had received the emails and text messages about the boycott.

Teacher Said al-Qahtani told AFP he was backing the campaign "to change US bias toward Israel and against the Arabs."

A student at King Saud University who did not want to be identified said he and his friends stopped eating their lunches at the campus McDonalds.

"This boycott is popular among university students," he said.

Incidental evidence in Riyadh suggested that some retailers, already hit by the economic slowdown, were feeling some impact on their business from the boycott.

"We have seen a downturn," one Starbucks manager told AFP, noting that the group has experienced such actions before, like when the United States invaded Iraq in 2003.

Many of the US brands in the region are partly controlled by Arab companies. The franchises for Starbucks across much of the Middle East, for one, are controlled by Kuwait-based conglomerate Alshaya.

Concerned about talk of a boycott, on January 5 the Starbucks headquarters in the United States issued a statement denying it was supporting Israel in the conflict.

"Starbucks is a non-political organization and does not support political causes. Further, the political preferences of a Starbucks partner at any level have absolutely no bearing on Starbucks company policies," it said.

Many Saudis are angry about Israel's two-week-old campaign against Gaza, which has left nearly 900 Palestinians dead, but are frustrated over the few outlets available to express their feelings.

The government has banned demonstrations on behalf of the Gazans out of concern that they could turn disorderly.

Saudi Arabia's top cleric, Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al Sheikh, has slammed pro-Gaza protests across Arab and Muslim cities as mobs generating a lot of noise, and said they should be replaced by donations to the Palestinians.

"The mob does not bring any good, and there is no benefit out of it. It is pure nonsense," he said in remarks published on Saturday.

pmh/wdb

<http://www.zawya.com/story.cfm/sidANA20090112T141553ZEVS98>

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#### hey fellas

by falluja\_superstar on 12.01.2009 [15:53 ]

where can i see vids of Hamas fighters killing IDF cowards in Gaza? some links please, thanks

#### That's the way

by Draco\_Annie on 12.01.2009 [16:37 ]

... because money talks. No violence, no plea, no huge march... just an eloquent silence. Let's just hope that this movement spreads around the globe, it's the only way we can bring those zionist monsters to their knees and stop their genocidal ways, and force them to reconsider their apartheidist policies.

Go, Saudis!

#### Eddie Murphy said it best in one of his movies...

by Kamau\_Ajamu on 12.01.2009 [17:42 ]

...the only way to hurt rich people is to turn them into poor people!

#### starbuck does support israel???

by bernie22 on 12.01.2009 [18:26 ]

The owner of starbucks has donated over a 100 million dollars to israel a few times and has been given israels highest civilian achievement award????  
If you donate to israel you support whatever actions they take???