Press release - Sport under the siege 2008

Press release, March 2008

From 23 to 30 March 2008, the Palestinian territories will be hosting the 4th Sport Under Siege Cup, a competition and project organised by Italian football supporters and a number of Italian amateur football teams, sports associations and social centres.

The Sport Under Siege Cup will see football teams from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank play friendly matches with around 100 Italian amateur footballers in the refugee camps of Gaza City, Jabalia camp, Khan Younis, Jayyus, Qalqiliya, Dehisheh camp, Abu Dis and Jerusalem.

The presence of the Italian delegation aims to reaffirm sport’s capacity to develop networks of solidarity with communities that have suffered too many years’ war and strife.

The civil population of the Gaza Strip has paid too high a price for recent Israeli military attacks. Further, the Israeli policy of sealing the borders of the territories, the economic embargo and the systematic destruction of infrastructure within the Gaza Strip are all actions that are condemnable under recent international agreements.

Some of the Palestinian partners of the Sport under Siege Project, including universities, cultural and sporting organizations, are eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Italian delegation and are looking forward to spending together a period of joy and relaxation after so much horror and destruction.

As well as the main sport events, there will be a number of seminars, workshops and solidarity meetings about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict organized in co-operation with the Stop the Wall Campaign and students of Al Aqsa and Al Quds Universities.

Through this event both the Italian and the Palestinian delegations intend to affirm the value of sport as a symbol of hope for a future of peace and justice.