Beat: News

When Cycling Becomes a Political Showcase

opinion column

SPAIN, , 28.08.2025, 16:52 Time

USPA NEWS - When sport becomes propaganda, silence is no longer neutral. The Vuelta Ciclista a España pedals between flags, omissions and uncomfortable truths. How far does ethics go when the jersey bears the name of a State accused of war crimes... and remains silent in the face of Hamas terrorism?

The 2025 Vuelta a España has ceased to be merely a sporting event. The presence of the Israel – Premier Tech team in the peloton has sparked a wave of reactions that go beyond athletics, delving into geopolitics, ethics, and propaganda.

This team, owned by Israeli billionaires Sylvan Adams and Ron Baron, presents itself as a private entity with no financial ties to Netanyahu's government. However, its name—"Israel"—doesn't go unnoticed. For many pro-Palestinian groups, its participation in La Vuelta is seen as a sportswashing operation: a reputational whitewashing strategy that seeks to gloss over the policies of the Israeli state through the spectacle of sport.

Protests erupted quickly. In Figueres, during the team time trial, there was already a disruption. In the coming days, Zaragoza, the Aragonese Pyrenees, and Navarra will be the stage for demonstrations organized by platforms such as Casa Palestina de Aragón, vallebenasxpalestina, and the Sports Boycott Platform Against Israel. Planned actions include pot-banging protests, Palestinian flags, denunciation videos, and gatherings at key points along the route. The message is clear: the participation of a team that symbolically represents a state accused of war crimes cannot be normalized.

Yet this narrative contains troubling silences. The same organizations mobilizing for Palestine systematically omit the role of the Palestinian government and the presence of terrorist groups like Hamas, responsible for attacks, kidnappings, and the use of civilians as human shields. Recognized as a terrorist organization by the European Union, the United States, and other countries, Hamas has actively contributed to the suffering of the Palestinian people. Why is this not mentioned? Why is this part of the conflict avoided?

The prevailing narrative is binary: Israel as the absolute aggressor and Palestine as the flawless victim. There's no room for nuance, nor for acknowledging that the Palestinian Authority has also been accused of corruption, internal repression, and a lack of democratic safeguards. There's no mention of women's rights in Gaza, nor of the persecution of dissidents. Solidarity, when selective, ceases to be ethical and becomes an ideological tool.

La Vuelta's organizers have clarified that the participation of Israel – Premier Tech is not a voluntary invitation but a regulatory obligation. As one of the 18 UCI WorldTour teams, its presence is mandated by the rules of the International Cycling Union. But that technical explanation isn't enough for those demanding moral consistency.

In Navarra, the Contigo Navarra coalition has called for the suspension of institutional events linked to the September 2 stage. The regional parliament has already called for a ceasefire in Gaza but has not condemned Hamas's violence or demanded accountability from Palestinian leadership. In this case, coherence seems to have ideological boundaries.

La Vuelta rolls on, but under a cloud of moral tension. Cycling, like any sport, cannot keep pedaling as if nothing is happening. When sport becomes a showcase, it also becomes a responsibility. And that responsibility demands viewing the conflict in all its complexity—without omitting or justifying any side.

Because if sport wants to be neutral, it must be neutral toward all. And if it wants to be ethical, it must be ethical without exceptions.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-25964/when-cycling-becomes-a-political-showcase.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Julio González Montero

Exemption from liability:
The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report. Julio González Montero

Editorial program service of General News Agency:
UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619