

JUR LEX READ

#*BLOCK
OUT*2024

*WAVE
EXPRESSION
OF
FREEDOM*

**HAFIQ
HASAN
BASRI**

ULASAN DRAMA:

***W: TWO
WORLDS***

Writes:

***A JOURNEY OF
EXPLORATION
AND GROWTH***



JUU LEX READ

e-ISSN: 2811-3462



#BLOCKOUT2024:

Epitome of Galvanising Wave of Expression Freedom

By: Muhammad Azril Bin Roslan & Ku Mohd Amir Aizat Ku Yusof
(azriloo4@uitm.edu.my) & (amir979@uitm.edu.my)

Boycott [

The #Blockout2024 movement represents a digital protest targeting celebrities who have remained silent on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Initiated after the Met Gala on May 6, 2024, the movement was catalysed by social media users who juxtaposed the event's extravagance with the dire conditions in Gaza. This movement encourages individuals to block celebrities on social media, thereby reducing their influence and the revenue they generate from advertising deals.

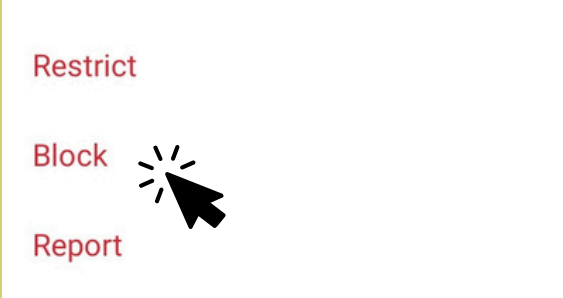
The main goal of #Blockout2024 is to make celebrities take responsibility for not speaking up about the Gaza conflict. By blocking them on social media, activists want to reduce their visibility and affect their income from followers and ads. Thus, by encouraging celebrities to actively involve themselves in addressing the Gaza crisis, the #Blockout2024 movement aims to harness their collective influence for the greater good of humanity and global welfare.

The #Blockout2024 movement holds the potential to assist Palestine in several significant ways. Firstly, by blocking celebrities who remain silent on the Gaza crisis, the movement increases awareness of the issue. This heightened visibility can lead to a broader public understanding and more informed discourse regarding the humanitarian situation in Gaza, thus pressuring media outlets and influential figures to offer more extensive coverage of the crisis.



Source: Middle East Monitor (MEM)

Secondly, as celebrities experience a decline in followers and engagement due to being blocked, they may feel compelled to address the Gaza crisis to recover their audience. When prominent figures speak out, they can significantly amplify the message, reaching millions of followers who might not have been previously aware of the situation. This amplification can foster greater empathy and support for Palestinian causes.



From an economic perspective, reducing the social media influence of these celebrities diminishes their earning potential from advertisements and sponsorships. This economic impact acts as a deterrent against remaining silent on critical issues and encourages celebrities to use their platforms more responsibly. Should celebrities begin to speak out, their influential voices can drive donations and support for humanitarian efforts in Gaza.



Finally, the increased awareness and engagement from celebrities can lead to the mobilisation of more resources for humanitarian aid. Celebrities who choose to support the cause can utilise their platforms to raise funds and direct attention to credible organisations operating in Gaza, thereby facilitating tangible support and relief efforts.

The #Blockout2024 movement primarily operates in the digital sphere but holds the potential to influence public discourse, urging high-profile individuals to act responsibly and mobilising support for the humanitarian crisis in Palestine. Through digital activism, it prompts reflections on societal responsibilities and compels celebrities to use their platforms for constructive engagement. This movement not only aims to hold individuals accountable but also serves as a catalyst for tangible support and resources directed towards addressing the ongoing crisis in Palestine.



“ This movement not only aims to hold individuals accountable but also serves as a catalyst for tangible support and resources directed towards addressing the ongoing crisis in Palestine. ”



The #Blockout2024 movement presents critical considerations regarding the interplay between social activism and freedom of speech. Although it does not impose legal restrictions on freedom of speech, it exerts significant social pressure on celebrities to speak out on certain issues. This social pressure can function as a form of coercion, compelling celebrities to address the Gaza crisis or risk losing their audience and the economic advantages associated with social media engagement.

RIGHT TO STAY SILENT OR TO SPEAK OUT?

This situation creates a conflict between the right to stay silent and the pressure to speak out. Celebrities have the legal right to choose whether to comment on political issues. However, the #Blockout2024 movement uses collective action to push celebrities to address the Gaza crisis. This activism highlights the ethical responsibilities of public figures, suggesting that staying silent during humanitarian crises is not neutral but can be seen as complicity.

The #Blockout2024 movement is gaining traction in ASEAN countries, especially in Malaysia. It targets public figures who haven't spoken about the Gaza crisis. In Malaysia, famous personalities like Michelle Yeoh and local figures like Anna Jobling and Neelofa are listed on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. These lists are part of a campaign to urge influential individuals to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

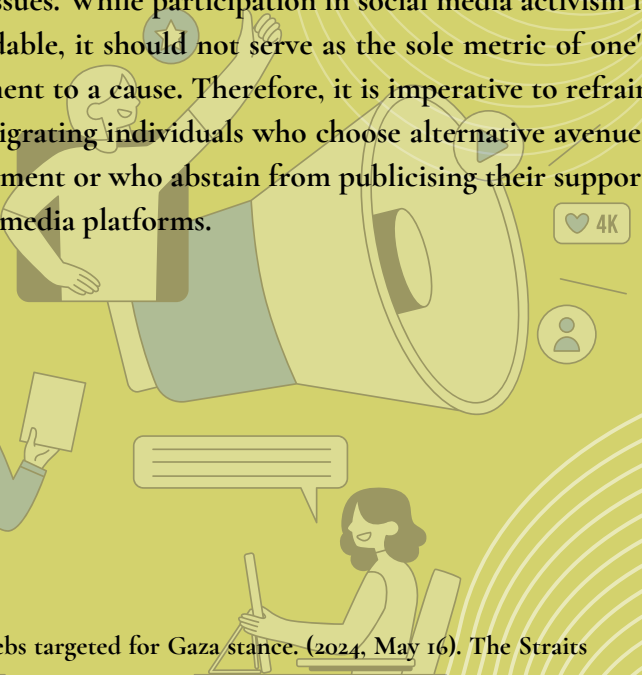


Unfortunately, the movement in Malaysia has turned extreme. For instance, singer and actor Naem Daniel, 27, recently filed a police report after receiving death threats against his parents from a social media user. Naem believes these threats are far removed from the original discussion about #Blockout2024. He also expressed frustration with people criticising those who choose not to boycott certain products, stating that such actions go against the teachings of Islam.

Previously, actor and presenter Awal Ashaari articulated dissatisfaction with colleagues who had cited him and his spouse as subjects for boycott within the #Blockout2024 movement. Awal recognized the diverse avenues available for public engagement on the persistent issue of warfare. He posited that implementing a boycott strategy would adversely impact Malaysian artists primarily dependent on their craft for sustenance.



In conclusion, it is important to underscore the endorsement of the #Blockout2024 movement and its call for boycotts as a legitimate form of social activism. However, within the discourse surrounding this movement, it is equally vital to acknowledge the diversity of individual contributions to societal issues. While participation in social media activism is commendable, it should not serve as the sole metric of one's commitment to a cause. Therefore, it is imperative to refrain from denigrating individuals who choose alternative avenues of engagement or who abstain from publicising their support on social media platforms.



REFERENCES

'Block Out' movement spreads to Malaysia; Michelle Yeoh among celebs targeted for Gaza stance. (2024, May 16). The Straits Times.

https://r.search.yahoo.com/_ylt=Awr4_mTRflm4OsQHKhXNy0A;_ylu=Y29sbwNncTEEEcG9zAzUEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3Ny/RV=2/RE=1718612946/RO=10/RU=https%3a%2f%2fwww.straitstimes.com%2fasia%2fse-asia%2fblock-out-movement-spreads-to-malaysia-michelle-yeoh-among-celebs-targeted-for-gaza-stance/RK=2/RS=Yn5ckZnnr2w6AJprmy5a.5Fs3zg-

Aw, E. C. X., & Labrecque, L. I. (2020). Celebrity endorsement in social media contexts: understanding the role of parasocial interactions and the need to belong. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 37(7), 895-908.

Buheji, M., & Ahmed, D. (2023). Keeping the Boycott Momentum—from 'WAR on GAZA'Till 'Free-Palestine'. *International Journal of Management (IJM)*, 14(7), 205-229.

Gupta, Y., Agarwal, S., & Singh, P. B. (2020). To study the impact of instafamous celebrities on consumer buying behavior. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*, 24(2), 1-13.

Mendez, M., II. (2024, May 14). Calls to boycott celebrities for silence on the war in Gaza spark a debate over online activism. *TIME*. <https://time.com/6977623/blockout-2024-celebrities-palestine-online-activism/>