

Response from Gabby Peretz, the founder of Beitar Givat Ze'ev, sent via e-mail on September 21, 2016:

Human Rights Watch is making a mistake by attacking football, which seeks to unite people. There have been Arabs on my team throughout the years, from the North, from Beit Tsafafa [East Jerusalem] – it's not a one-off thing. Every year, Arabs play on the team. They are registered in the [Football] Association, and they are received with love.

We didn't take over the field. We received it 20 years ago. I work in education, so that the children won't run around in the streets. I don't care if they are Jews or Arabs, from Givat Ze'ev or Jerusalem – everyone plays on my teams. Whoever tries to hurt those teams is committing a crime.

Peace among the nations can be achieved on the field, through football games. I suggest looking for other issues that keep the nations apart and addressing them. Using football as a political poking stick doesn't speak highly of your movement.

The children of Givat Ze'ev do not just play football. Residents have many other extra-curricular activities they send their children to, as is the case in every community and every functioning society.

Does your movement really think they can prevent any activity whatsoever by children who were born to parents who were also born in Givat Ze'ev? How far do you want to go with the harm you cause to your people, in the name of some political achievement?

Leave us to engage in our educational and cultural work for the sake of Israel's children, Jews, immigrants from Russia and Ethiopia, and Arabs from Givat Ze'ev's neighboring towns.