

## **Palestine group hits at Shatter's Bin Laden claim**

**Mark Tighe , Sunday Times, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2012 (not available online)**

The Palestine support group that campaigned to stop two Irish bands touring Israel has described a statement by Alan Shatter, the justice minister, linking them with supporters of Osama Bin Laden as “outrageous”.

Last week Dervish, a traditional Irish music group, cancelled a tour of Israel after it received hate-filled messages. The Irish Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC) set up a page on Facebook entitled “Dervish, Don't Bring Your Travelling Show to Apartheid Israel.” It called on supporters to leave messages on the band's Facebook page.

Cathy Jordan, the band's lead singer, said: “It was far from our intention to stir up all this anger and hatred, when the opposite was what was intended.”

Full Set, another Irish band who were to provide support for Dervish, said the “goodness had gone out of the trip”.

In response, the IPSC said it would like to thank Dervish for “refusing to whitewash Israeli apartheid, occupation and war crimes against the Palestinian people”.

In a statement on Friday, Shatter accused the IPSC of cyber-bullying and said its actions had been noted by supporters of Bin Laden, as revealed in documents released by the US government last week.

“Worryingly, reports of newly declassified document, seized from his hideout in Pakistan following his death last year, indicate that the actions of the IPSC and its associates have caught the attention of some Bin Laden followers who now see Ireland as promising ground for support”, he said.

Raymond Deane, cultural liaison officer for the IPSC, said he was shocked by the statement. “It's demeaning to the Irish government and people that a minister would descend to intervening in a debate of the kind”, he said. “The attempt to make a link with Bin Laden is the worst kind of disgusting rhetoric.”

Deane said what Shatter described as cyber-bullying it would call democracy.

“We successfully attempted to get Dervish to abide by a boycott they didn't know about. If there was abuse and venom that came after, and not from us. We sent them messages of congratulations after they announced they would not go.””