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## US Moslem group renews Burger King boycott

By Janine Zacharia

WASHINGTON (July 6) - An American Moslem umbrella organization has renewed a call for a worldwide boycott of Burger King.

The move came a year after it first instructed Moslems around the world not to buy from the fast-food chain to protest a branch in Ma'aleh Adumim.

Burger King decided last August to withdraw the franchise rights of the restaurant, after what it said was "misrepresentation of fact by our franchisee in Israel," Rikamor, Ltd. Burger King said it was led to believe the franchise would be located in Israel proper.

The franchise, however, remains open because of an unresolved dispute with Rikamor that is being handled by international arbiters.

Khalid Turaani, executive director of American Muslims for Jerusalem, lashed out yesterday at Burger King for refusing to give any more information about the arbitration proceedings.

"What we are doing is renewing the boycott. We feel that Burger King has started to stonewall us. They are unwilling to release any information on the progress of their talks with their Israeli partner. At the same time they are not willing to reaffirm their commitment of August 1999 to close down the Ma'aleh Adumim restaurant. Because of that, we felt they have left us no option but to call for the boycott," Turaani said.

"We'll explore every possible way of making sure that Burger King is boycotted and isolated until they close down the outlet in Ma'aleh Adumim."



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In response, Burger King issued the following statement: "Following extensive discussions, Burger King Corporation and Rikamor Ltd, its independent franchisee in Israel, have been unable to reach an agreement and have agreed to refer the matter to an international arbitration. We are working diligently to reach a solution to this very complex situation.

"Burger King Corporation does not engage in political debates. We are a business committed to serving our customers quality products."

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