



What is Home Depot's involvement in Israel?

Since its foundation in 1979 by Bernie Marcus and Arthur Blank, Home Depot has become a huge player in the North American home improvement market.¹ With over 2000 stores across Canada, the US, Mexico, and China, Home Depot's business decisions hold a great deal of economic weight worldwide. Currently, Israeli companies such as Keter Plastic, Smart Storage and Zag supply more than \$150 million worth of Home Depot's products.²

How is Home Depot encouraging Israel's colonial expansion?

Home Depot continues to encourage Israeli colonial expansion by selling a large array of products from the Israeli company Keter Plastic and its subsidiaries (e.g. Keter-Black and Decker, Lotemplast bath mats, and Workforce.) Keter Plastic owns and operates two plants in illegal Israeli colonies established within the occupied West Bank: one in the Barkan Industrial Zone, and another in Oranit.

The Barkan industrial Zone is the second largest industrial zone in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, and is home to a myriad of businesses and factories,³ many of which have been under international political pressure to relocate due to the illegality of the Barkan colony.⁴ The Oranit colony, along with three other Israeli colonies in the West Bank, was approved for expansion by former Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz in 2006.⁵ Home Depot has recently awarded Keter Plastic a \$150 million contract which will last for at least three years.

The establishment of colonies and colonial infrastructure on occupied territories is illegal according to Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention⁶, and is considered a war crime according to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.⁷ Furthermore, the continuing establishment of Jewish-only colonies on Palestinian land significantly hinders the achievement of a "comprehensive just and lasting peace deal in the Middle East," as asserted in UN Security Council Resolution 446 (March 22, 1979).

Why boycott Home Depot?

By awarding business contracts to Israeli firms and profiting from the sale of products manufactured in illegally located colonies, Home Depot is encouraging and legitimizing Israel's military occupation of Palestinian land. This is in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, numerous UN Security Council resolutions, official Canadian policy on the Israeli-occupied Arab territories, and Article 3 (Section C) of the UN Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises. This last instrument of international law states that "[t]ransnational corporations and other business enterprises shall not engage in nor benefit from war crimes, [or] crimes against humanity..."⁸ This document also stipulates that corporations are prohibited from engaging in actions that obstruct or impede economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.⁹

The labelling of the Keter Plastic products produced in the occupied territories as "products of Israel" in Home Depot stores is also problematic. Although under the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA), there is no distinction between products that are sourced from occupied territories and those from the state of Israel; the Canadian government does not recognize Israel's claims to the West Bank.¹⁰ Therefore, by labelling products made in the West Bank as an Israeli commodity, products coming from illegal colonies are able to circumvent Canadian import taxes and duty fees, and inhibit buyers from making informed and ethical consumption choices.

Moreover, the Keter Plastic plant in the Barkan industrial zone contributes to vast amounts of industrial waste that is subsequently discharged into the waterways and lands near the Palestinian village of Salfit.¹¹ This waste affects nearby occupied Palestinian populations who rely on the polluted farmland for produce, and on surrounding rivers for irrigation.¹² Environmental standards for businesses are not

enforced in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, and some of Israel's "dirtiest" businesses are located to the West Bank as a consequence.

It is also important to note that in July 2005, more than 170 Palestinian civil society organizations issued a call asking the international community to boycott Israeli products in order to promote recognition of the Palestinians' right to self-determination. The Palestinian call asked for a boycott of any business or institution participating directly or indirectly in the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territories. Thus, justice-minded Canadians would want to boycott Home Depot in an effort to economically pressure Israel to cease its occupation.

How is Home Depot violating its own corporate commitments?

Home Depot is not only violating international law, but is also going against its own code of conduct. The Home Depot Business Code of Conduct and Ethics is based on acting with integrity, respecting all people, and "doing the right thing each and every day for the benefit of [its] Associates, customers, vendors, suppliers and the communities [it] serve[s]..."¹³ In the section on Home Depot's commitments to its vendors and suppliers, the code states that Home Depot will select business partners whose values and business practices are compatible with its own high standards.¹⁴ By doing business with Keter Plastic and other Israeli companies, it is evident that Home Depot is disregarding its corporate commitments and engaging in an unethical business partnership.

When should the boycott of Home Depot end?

The boycott will end when Home Depot terminates its contract with Keter Plastic and all other Israeli manufacturers, or when Israel ends its occupation of Palestinian territory.

How else can I pressure Home Depot to join the boycott?

CJPME's boycott campaign is calling upon all individuals and members willing to put pressure on the Israeli government to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories. All concerned citizens can visit the CJPME Website at www.cjpme.org/bds.htm for additional tools to pressure Home Depot to join the boycott.

- CJPME encourages individuals to go to its Home Depot boycott action alert at www.cjpme.org/consumerboycott.htm to send their complaints and questions to the executive management of Home Depot in each province and territory.
- A selection of letter templates is available on the CJPME Boycott site at www.cjpme.org/consumerboycott.htm.
- Also, a mechanism to bring together the shareholders of Home Depot is set up on the CJPME Boycott site www.cjpme.org/bds.htm to prepare for possible shareholders-based initiatives to pressure Home Depot.

¹ "Our History." *Home Improvement, Home Renovation, Tools, & Hardware | Home Depot Canada*. 2011.

² "Home Depot Awards \$150 Million To Keter Plastic - Israel Business Today." *Research - Articles - Journals | Find Research Fast at HighBeam Research*. 1 Aug. 2000.

³ "Info on Barkan Industrial Park in the Occupied Territories." *Kav LaOved - Worker's Hotline*. 06 June 2009.

⁴ Sheizaf, Noam. "Citing Anti-settlement Pressure, Multilock to Close W. Bank Factory." +972. 22 Dec. 2010.; Shalom, Gush. "Barkan Wineries Leave Barkan Settlement." *[JUST] International Movement for a Just World*. 1 Sept. 2008.; Gush Shalom Welcomes Company's Decision To Move Factory Away From Settlement | General News | Peacefmonline.com." *Foreign News*. 14 Oct. 2010.

⁵ "Israel OKs Expansion of Jewish Settlements." *USATODAY.com*. 21 May 2006.

⁶ "International Humanitarian Law - Fourth 1949 Geneva Convention." *International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) - Home*. 2005.

⁷ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, International Criminal Court, Art. 8, 2, b., viii.

⁸ United Nations: Economic and Social Council, "Norms on the responsibilities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises with regard to human rights," E/CN.4/Sub.2/2003/12/Rev.2

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ "Canadian Policy on Key Issues in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT)*. 2009.

¹¹ "Israelis, Palestinians see eye to eye on fly tipping in West Bank," Aug. 30, 2007, Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

¹² Eyre, Peter. "Palestine- An Israeli Dumping Ground for Radioactive/toxic Waste." *The Palestine Telegraph*. 08 June 2010.

¹³ "The Home Depot, Inc. - Business Code of Conduct and Ethics." *The Home Depot, Inc. - Building Towards Success*. 2008.

¹⁴ *Ibid*