



Is mainstream opposition to Israel’s “settlements” growing?

Yes, very significantly. The following are examples of the scope and expression of this opposition:

The United Church of Canada (UCC): On August 17 2012, the 41st General Council of the United Church of Canada — the country’s second-largest Christian denomination — voted by a wide margin to call on Israel to dismantle the “settlements” and “the separation barrier in all sections where it crosses over the Green Line.” It also resolved to establish a church-wide campaign on “settlement products,” and to encourage UCC members to avoid any and all such products.^{1 2}

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC): In May 2011, the 3-million-member CLC called for a ban of all goods produced and exported from the “settlements.” It also urged Canada’s government to exclude such goods from preferential tariff treatment under the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement. It urged Canadian companies to not profit from the occupation of Palestine and the siege on Gaza.

United Methodist Church (US): On May 2 2012, the United Methodist Church—the US’s largest Protestant denomination—passed a strongly worded resolution denouncing the occupation and “settlements”, and urging “all nations to prohibit the import of products made by companies in Israeli settlements on Palestinian land.”³

The Presbyterian Church of the US: On July 7 2012, the US Presbyterian Church’s General Assembly voted with a 71 percent majority to boycott all Israeli products coming from the occupied Palestinian Territories.⁴

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Ontario division: In May 2006, CUPE’s 200,000-member Ontario Division resolved to support a boycott of Israel until Israel “recognizes the Palestinian right to self-determination.” The decision was taken unanimously by the 896 members at the Ontario Division’s convention.⁵

Trade Union Congress, UK: In September 2009, Britain’s 6.5-million-member TUC called for a boycott and sanctions campaign against Israel; it also called for a ban on goods originating from the “settlements” and an end to the EU’s preferential trade treatment of Israel.⁶

The Methodist Church of Britain: On June 10 2010, the British Methodist Church’s governing body called on Methodists to support and engage with the boycott of Israeli goods emanating from illegal settlements.⁷

The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO): On May 26 2012, the 1.5-million-member Confederation agreed to support the boycott of Israeli goods from the occupied territories. It also resolved to work to ensure that the capital over which it has control is not invested in Israeli securities and that employers cease doing business with companies that earn money from the illegal settlements. (As well, it announced support for Palestine’s admission to the UN and the lifting of the blockade against Gaza.)⁸

South African dockworkers: In February 2009, the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (~47,000 members) announced it would refuse to unload all Israeli goods coming into the country’s ports.⁹

How else has mainstream society shown support for Palestinian human rights?

In many different ways, including the following:

Popular international support for Palestine’s right to self-determination: According to a July-August 2011 BBC-GlobeScan poll of 20,466 citizens in 19 countries, 49 percent support Palestine’s admission to the UN, while 21 percent said their government should oppose it.¹⁰ This support held regardless of government opposition to Palestine’s admission:

Responses to BBC polling question “Should your government support the Palestinian bid for statehood?”

(selected countries)

	Yes	No
France	54 %	20 %
Germany	53	28
UK	53	26
Australia	50	17
Canada	46	25
US	45	36
Mexico	45	15
Brazil	41	26
Chile	39	9

CJPME, based on data from BBC-Globescan poll.¹¹

The above figures reveal that citizens are ahead of their governments in terms of their degree of support for a Palestinian state, despite Israel's objections. Full membership in the UN would put Palestinians and Israel on a more equal footing diplomatically.

Vigorous grassroots campaigns to oblige stores to not carry "settlement" products and/or Israeli products: Some 12000 consumers signed a petition asking Migros, Switzerland's largest retail chain, and COOP, then the second largest, to stop selling Israeli products until Israel respects international law.^{12 13} Pressure from members of the Co-operative Group (Co-Op)—the UK's fifth biggest food retailer and its largest mutual business—led it to announce that it would no longer do business with companies exporting produce from illegal Israeli settlements.^{14 15} Lobbying by Norwegian labour groups obliged VITA, a major retail chain with 160 stores throughout Norway, to halt the sale of all "products originating from settlements in occupied territories," in late March 2012. VITA had been Norway's main seller AHAVA Dead Sea products.¹⁶

Boycott support by consumer co-ops and community-based groups: In July 2012, the 15,000-member Olympia Food Co-op in Olympia, Washington, US, voted to boycott products from the "settlements" and Israel proper.¹⁷ On November 3 2010, AMARC (the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters)—an international organization with nearly 4,000 member organizations and associates in 130 countries—resolved to "comprehensively and consistently boycott all Israeli media institutions and products [...] to end Israel's occupation, colonization and system of apartheid."¹⁸

Does opposition to Israeli settlements undermine Israel's "right to exist"?

No. For example, the UK's TUC,¹⁹ CUPE Ontario Division,²⁰ and the UCC have each explicitly expressed support for the right of Israel to exist under a two-state solution. The UCC also mentions support for "the demographic integrity of Israel"²¹ (i.e. its current Jewish:Arab ratio).

Why have mainstream perceptions shifted?

Mainstream public opinion has shifted due to:

- a) The sense that the conflict has gone on far too long, and that *both sides – including the Palestinians –* have legitimate grievances.
- b) A sense that Western-sponsored diplomacy will continue to be ineffective in the Israel-Palestine conflict. This, plus a sense that domestic political

forces in the West prevent the US and others from playing the role of a neutral intermediary.

- c) Dismay over Israel's brutal and disproportionate military actions in recent years, including: Israel's destruction of Lebanon (2006); Israel's war on Gaza (2008-2009); Israel's commando raid on the Gaza aid flotilla (2010); and Israel's inhumane siege of Gaza.
- d) Frustrations over Israel's intensification of colony-building and the extension of its Wall. Figures from Israel's population registry released in July 2012 showed a 4.5 percent increase in Jewish settlers in the West Bank in the previous 12 months, a total that exceeds 350,000²² (not including East Jerusalem) and which has almost doubled in the past 12 years.²³
- e) Growing public awareness of suffering imposed on Palestinians by Israel's ongoing military occupation and "settlement enterprise."

¹ "Israel/Palestine Policy Report – final unofficial text." 41st General Council. United Church of Canada. August 17, 2012.

² It also recommended that divestment from companies involved in the occupation be considered. It asked the Canadian government to label settlement products uniquely and ensure that they not be given preferential treatment under the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement. It invited other Canadian churches to participate in the campaign

³ Goodstein, Laurie. "Methodists Vote Against Ending Investments Tied to Israel." New York Times, May 2, 2012.

⁴ "Boycott added to Presbyterian tools for Middle East peace." Presbyterian Church USA. July 7, 2012.

⁵ "CUPE joins boycott of Israel." National Post. May 29, 2006

⁶ Paul, Jonny. "British trade unions to boycott Israeli goods." Jerusalem Post, September 18, 2009.

⁷ "Justice for Palestine and Israel." Methodist Church in Britain, June 30, 2010.

⁸ Boycott goods from occupied areas. Press release from the 2012 Swedish Trade Union Confederation Congress. May 26, 2012.

⁹ Rettig Gur, Haviv. "S. Africans won't unload Israeli goods." Jerusalem Post, February 4, 2009.

¹⁰ "BBC poll shows support for Palestinian state." BBC News. Sept. 18, 2011.

¹¹ Ibid. BBC News. Sept. 18, 2011. The percentages of "Yes" and "No" responses do not total 100, given that some of those polled responded either "Don't know" or "It depends" or "Should abstain."

¹² Migros responded by introducing in early June 2012 clear labelling allowing consumers to distinguish between "settlement products" and products from Israel proper.

¹³ "Swiss supermarket to label WB, e. J'lem products." Jerusalem Post, May 30, 2012.

¹⁴ McVeigh, Tracy, and Sherwood, Harriet. "Co-op boycotts exports from Israel's West Bank settlements." The Observer, April 29 2012.

¹⁵ Robbins, Annie. "Huge Co-op in UK dumps suppliers linked to Israeli settlements." Mondoweiss.net. April 28, 2012.

¹⁶ "Retail chain in Norway halts Ahava sales." Jerusalem Post, April 2, 2012.

¹⁷ "Olympia food co-op boycotting products from Israel." Seattle Times. July 21, 2010.

¹⁸ AMARC 10 motion to support Palestinian civil society call for BDS.

¹⁹ Paul, Jonny. "Calls for settlement boycott in UK." Jerusalem Post, April 12, 2010.

²⁰ "Q&A - CUPE ONTARIO'S RESOLUTION 50: Towards peace and justice in the Middle East."

²¹ "Israel/Palestine Policy Report – final unofficial text." 41st General Council. United Church of Canada. August 17, 2012.

²² This figure does not include the population of illegal Israeli "settlements" in East Jerusalem, conservatively estimated to be over 200,000.

²³ Sherwood, Harriet. "Israeli spending on West Bank settlements up 38%." Haaretz, July 31, 2012.