



## Why is CJPME calling for a boycott of Israel?

There are two reasons why CJPME is advocating a boycott of Israel:

First, over 170 Palestinian civil society organizations have asked for such a boycott, in order to pressure Israel to stop violating international law and Palestinians' human rights.

In July 2005, 170 Palestinian civil society organizations issued a joint call to the international community to initiate boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) activities against Israel.<sup>1 2</sup> They did so because the international community's attempts to modify Israel's conduct by "constructive engagement" (i.e. dialogue, pressure at the UN, etc.) have failed entirely. Successive Israeli governments have ignored dozens of UN resolutions condemning Israel's military occupation of Palestinian territories and the Golan Heights, its siege of Gaza, its establishment of illegal colonies (settlements) in occupied Palestinian territories, and its systemic discrimination against Palestinians resident in the occupied territories and Israel. Israeli governments have also violated most of the key commitments they undertook in signed peace accords to stop engaging in those actions. Since Israel is an image-conscious, trade-dependent country, a boycott may well work where diplomacy, dialogue and negotiations have not.

Second, many multinational and Israeli companies are violating international law by investing in or profiting from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. To give just a few examples:

- Caterpillar sells bulldozers to the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), which use them to destroy Palestinian homes and olive groves, often to make way for illegal Israeli colonies built in the West Bank. The establishment of the colonies violates Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, prohibiting occupying forces from transferring their people into occupied territories.
- Ikea delivers furniture to Israeli settlers living in illegal colonies in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). This stabilizes and "normalizes" the colonization process.
- IBM is engaged at many levels in the Israeli economy, and has bid for and won technology contracts issued by the Israeli armed forces.
- Source Vagabond Systems and other Israeli military contractors supply hydration systems and outdoor gear that make IDF soldiers more physically comfortable while they occupy Palestinian territory. Such companies also sell these kinds of items in Canadian stores, such as **Mountain Equipment Coop**.
- Motorola USA and its wholly-owned subsidiary **Motorola Israel** develop and provide equipment to the Israeli military and settlers, including bomb fuses, military communication systems, and surveillance systems for the Wall and the illegal Israeli colonies.
- Ahava produces creams and cosmetics in Mitzpe Shalem, an Israeli colony in the West Bank. It uses illicitly-obtained Palestinian natural resources — minerals and Dead Sea salts — in its products. These products are sold in department stores and pharmacies in Canada and elsewhere.
- Golan Heights Winery and other Israeli wineries make wine in the Golan Heights—Syrian land occupied by Israel since the 1967 war. About 38 percent of the \$22 million worth of Israel's annual wine exports originates in the Golan Heights.<sup>3 4</sup> They are marketed in Canada as Israeli wines.

In addition, Israel's exports of other products – even ones not directly implicated in the occupation – bolster its economy. This in turn has helped successive governments – all of whom have continued the Occupation and promoted further colonization of Palestinian land – get re-elected.

## What is the focus of CJPME's targeted boycott campaign?

CJPME has launched a targeted boycott campaign which focuses on two particular areas:

Consumer Products: CJPME is advocating the boycott of consumer products and outlets, especially:

- Those products made by companies — be they Israeli or not — that participate in some way in Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories. This could be because they have facilities in the occupied

territories, or because their products are sold to the Israeli government or army, and facilitate the Occupation. This boycott also applies to Canadian retailers who sell products from such companies.

- Products from Israeli companies. The boycott of Israeli companies sends a clear message that Israel's illegal behaviour in the occupied Palestinian territories will not be tolerated by international civil society. Such international action should send a strong signal to Israel.

#### Performing Artists: CJPME is calling on artists to refuse to perform in Israel.

- CJPME calls on performing artists to refrain from performing in Israel until Israel ends its Occupation. While such a "cultural boycott" has limited economic impact, it has a huge symbolic impact. The performing artists' boycott of apartheid South Africa was a significant factor that contributed to the end of Apartheid there. In the era of globalized culture, Israelis, like the citizens of many other countries, are eager to attend concerts of popular bands from abroad. Israelis point to such concerts as a signal that the international community is "with Israel," (i.e. that there is no need to take UN resolutions condemning its conduct too seriously just yet.) Elvis Costello and many other artists have courageously refused to perform there. Such a consumer boycott and the refusal of artists to perform in Israel will send powerful messages to ordinary Israelis and their government that the world finds the Occupation repugnant.

### **How can CJPME adherents get involved?**

There are many ways to support CJPME's boycott campaign, which is extremely well-documented on the CJPME Website. For more information on CJPME's boycott strategy, see [www.cjpme.org/bds.htm](http://www.cjpme.org/bds.htm). For specifics on CJPME's consumer boycott, see [www.cjpme.org/consumerboycott.htm](http://www.cjpme.org/consumerboycott.htm), and for specifics on CJPME's cultural boycott, see [www.cjpme.org/culturalboycott.htm](http://www.cjpme.org/culturalboycott.htm). The CJPME Website's Boycott Centre provides the following for each active boycott campaign:

- Facts and specifics as to why CJPME is recommending the boycott of a particular product or reseller.
- Letters and other aids to boycott participants, so they can make it clear to the company and its local reps why the boycott is being carried out.
- Email action alerts, which enable participants to send an email to corporate executives telling them the reasons for the boycott.
- Suggestions of other places to shop, to enable boycotting citizens to carry out their boycott.
- Other opportunities to develop boycott constituencies which can act in concert in the future.

### **Why will the BDS campaign be successful?**

Israel is a trade-dependent country, unlike a country like North Korea. Not buying Israeli products signals that one doesn't buy the Occupation. A boycott will be successful because it's a simple, non-violent strategy which, *if enough people participate in it*, will make the economic and political cost of continuing the Occupation too high for Israeli governments to withstand.

Israel is image-conscious, and seeks a secure place among the community of Western liberal democracies. Most Israelis have friends and relatives overseas. An effective BDS campaign will let Israelis know that the occupation is unacceptable to the international community.

### **How long will the BDS campaign take?**

In the case of South Africa, apartheid ended about 30 years after the cultural boycott began. That boycott gained momentum very slowly and was only supported by the US and Canadian governments late in the process. However, with the advent of Internet, ordinary people and performing artists can be informed about the boycott of Israel more quickly, and begin making the right ethical choices more rapidly.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Palestinian Civil Society Calls for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel Until it Complies with International Law and Universal Principles of Human Rights," 9 July 2005, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, [http://www.palestinecampaign.org/Index5b.asp?m\\_id=1&l1\\_id=19&l2\\_id=55](http://www.palestinecampaign.org/Index5b.asp?m_id=1&l1_id=19&l2_id=55), retrieved 2010.08.12

<sup>2</sup> Many Israeli human rights organizations, for example the Israeli Committee Against Housing Demolitions, are also supporting BDS.

<sup>3</sup> Ringler, Elana. "Israeli wine flows onto international shelves." Reuters. August 18, 2009

<sup>4</sup> "Israeli Wine Information Sheet 2006" Israeli Government's official website by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://berlin.mfa.gov.il/mfm/web/main/document.asp?DocumentID=94104&MissionID=88>