



What is AHAVA?

Established in 1988, AHAVA Dead Sea Laboratories Ltd. is the world's leading skin care and cosmetics company specializing in products composed of minerals and resources from the Dead Sea.¹ Based in the Dead Sea region in the Jordan Rift Valley, their products are distributed throughout Israel, Europe, and North America, with their export revenue accounting for the majority of their profit.²

How does AHAVA support Israel's colonial expansion?

AHAVA is economically linked to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories. Almost forty-five percent of AHAVA is owned by Mitzpe Shalem and Kalia, two illegal Israeli colonies established near the Dead Sea shorelines of the West Bank.³ Being under partial ownership of these illegal colonies means AHAVA's profits translate into direct benefits for the colonies and their residents. Additionally, approximately eighteen percent of AHAVA is owned by Shamrock Holdings, a large holding firm committed to Israel's growth. Shamrock Holdings is further entangled in not only other illegal Israeli colonies but, also, invests in the construction of Israel's separation wall.^{4,5}

Furthermore, AHAVA is particularly central to the longevity of the Mitzpe Shalem colony, home of AHAVA's primary manufacturing factory. AHAVA provides employment opportunities in its factory to the colony's residents, and attracts tourists and customers to the AHAVA Visitors Center and store located in Mitzpe Shalem.^{6,7} Not only do these economic opportunities serve to legitimate the colony and sustain its economic growth, but AHAVA's operations also allow the colony to absorb new colonists.

Under international law, the establishment of colonies and colonial infrastructure on occupied territory is illegal. This is indicated in the Fourth Geneva Convention (Art. 49, p. 6), and in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which considers the transfer of a population to occupied territories a war crime.⁸ Furthermore, the continuing establishment and expansion of colonies on Palestinian land significantly hinders the achievement of a "comprehensive, just and lasting peace deal in the Middle East," as described in UN Security Council Resolution 446 (March 22, 1979).

Why boycott AHAVA?

In addition to contributing to the illegal colonial expansion of Israel, there are three key reasons for boycotting AHAVA. First, the mud and mineral resources used in AHAVA's Dead Sea products are drawn from the Dead Sea shores of occupied Palestinian territory.⁹ This extraction of resources from occupied territory is a violation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3005, and 3336, and the Fourth Geneva Convention (Art. 33, p.2), all of which forbid an occupying power from exploiting the natural resources of an occupied nation or territory. This exploitation of resources is also in violation of Article 3(Section C) of the UN Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises (2003) which states that "business enterprises shall not engage in nor benefit from war crimes, crimes against humanity...other violations of humanitarian law and other international crimes against the human person as defined by international law, in particular human rights and humanitarian law."

Secondly, although AHAVA's products are manufactured in AHAVA's factory located in the West Bank and contain resources extracted from the West Bank, AHAVA's products indicate that they originate from "The Dead Sea, Israel".¹⁰ This is particularly problematic for Canadian citizens and taxpayers. The Canadian government does not recognize Israel's claims to the West Bank; therefore, labelling products made in the West Bank as Israeli commodities allows AHAVA products to circumvent Canadian import taxes and duty fees through the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA), costing "Canadian taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in unpaid taxes."¹¹ Additionally, the misleading labels prevent Canadian consumers from making well-informed ethical consumption choices.

Thirdly, Israel's current colonial endeavours in the West Bank are in violation of the 1993 Oslo Accords. This point is particularly important as pro-colony/anti-boycott advocates often cite the provision under the Accord permitting Israel to retain temporary control over their colonies in the West Bank – encompassed in Area C – that existed at the time of the agreement.¹² However, Area C was never intended to be under permanent jurisdiction of Israel – there was to be an eventual transfer of this land to Palestinian control.¹³ More importantly, the post-1993 expansion of existing colonies, construction of new colonies, dramatic increase in the settler population, and surge in government investment in the colonies violates the Accord's prohibition of parties changing the status of the occupied territories, outlined in Annex II (p 6).¹⁴

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 in the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territories.

How have AHAVA-supplying companies responded to calls for boycott?

The campaign to Boycott AHAVA products has sparked numerous initiatives across North America, Europe, Israel and Palestine. One notable success comes from the United States where a letter writing campaign in 2010 led by Costco members resulted in Costco announcing its plan to discontinue AHAVA Dead Sea products.¹⁵ AHAVA products are still distributed in Canada in stores such as Hudson's Bay Company and Sears, and are also available for purchase online.

When should the boycott of AHAVA end?

The boycott will end when AHAVA dismantles its operations in the illegal colonies located in the occupied Palestinian territories and when Israel ends its occupation of Palestinian territory.

How else can I pressure AHAVA 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 AHAVA to cease its operations in the West Bank and support Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories.

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

¹ Ahava Website: <http://www.ahavaus.com>. See 'Discover Ahava'.

² "From Israel with Ahava" Haaretz Website. Jan. 31, 2007.

³ Details of Stock Holdings in Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories Ltd.: <http://dl.dropbox.com/u/193052/StockholdingsAhavaDeadSeaLaboratories.pdf>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Shamrock Israel Growth Fund Website: see companies 'Teva Naot' & 'Orad' under the 'Active Investment' section.

⁶ Jewish Agency for Israel Website:

<http://www.jewishagency.org/JewishAgency/English/Aliyah/Absorption+Options/Municipal+and+Community+Absorption/Mitzpe+Shalem.htm>

⁷ "Concern over Israel settlement exports." BBC News Website: Nov. 5, 2008.

⁸ "Settlements and International Law". Settlement Report vol. 12 no. 7, March, 2002, Foundations for Middle East Peace

⁹ "Holland to probe if Ahava products made on occupied land." YNet News Website: Nov. 11, 2009.

¹⁰ Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs website: *Canadian policies on key issues in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, last modified July 21, 2009

¹¹ "Time to boycott products from illegal Israeli settlements." Rabble Website: May 26, 2010.

¹² Jurist Legal Intelligence, University of Pittsburg: <http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/World/palest.htm>.

¹³ See: Oslo Accord (1993) & Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip (1995).

¹⁴ "Five Years of Oslo: The Continuing Victimization of Human Rights" LAW Publication, Sept. 1998.

¹⁵ "US Store discontinues Ahava dead sea products after boycott call" International Middle East Media Center Website: Feb. 12, 2010. Note that Costco did not confirm that its decision to stop carrying AHAVA products was a result of the letter-writing campaign.