

*Canadians for Justice and Peace  
in the Middle East*  
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September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Mr. David Labistour  
CEO  
Mountain Equipment Co-op ( MEC)  
149 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, BC, V5Y 4A6

Dear Mr. Labistour,

I am writing to ask you to no longer sell Israeli products in Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) stores. This ban should include products from Source Vagabond Systems as well as other non-military Israeli suppliers. I am urging this action on your part, because it is the appropriate legal and ethical position for your company.

I am urging this change of MEC company policy for two reasons:

- First, Palestinian civil society has called for the international community to boycott Israeli products until Israel complies with international law and universal principles of human rights vis-a-vs the Palestinians and their territory.
- Second, the UN Human Rights Norms for Business, unanimously adopted in 2003, prohibits transnational corporations and other business entities from profiting from violations of international humanitarian law (Art. 3), and also prohibits them from using suppliers who do not respect human rights norms (Art. 4.) As a supplier to the Israeli military, Source VagaBond Systems is directly implicated in the violations of international humanitarian and human rights law perpetrated by the Israeli military. As such, by using Source Vagabond Systems as a supplier, MEC is likewise in violation of the UN Human Rights Norms for Business.

The organization I represent, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME), is an organization whose mission is to empower Canadians to promote justice, development and peace in the Middle East. In the coming months and years, we will be promoting a large and growing campaign to get Canadian citizens and organs of civil society to boycott and divest from Israel. As a grassroots, secular, non-partisan volunteer organization, our policies are founded in 1) respect for international law, 2) a belief in a single standard for all, and 3) the position that violence is not a solution. We have 27,000 adherents across Canada, and active groups in numerous major Canadian cities. Our Website is [www.cjpme.org](http://www.cjpme.org).

The fundamentals of the situation in Israel-Palestine are simple. The UN Partition Plan of 1947 dictated that two states be created in Palestine: an Israeli one, and a Palestinian one. In 1948, the

Israeli state was created, but the Palestinian one was not. In 1967, Israel took control of all the land that was to become a Palestinian state (including East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip), and continues to effectively control these territories, denying Palestinians their right to self-determination, as well as dozens of civil, human and humanitarian rights. This occupation is recognized as a hostile military occupation – as reflected by the unanimous vote of the Signatories to the Fourth Geneva Convention of Dec. 5, 2001.

The call for a boycott of Israel on the part of the Palestinians because of rights abuses is not a frivolous one. The UN General Assembly votes yearly and decisively on the rights violations of the Palestinians by the Israelis. For illustration, I provide three examples below:

- Resolution 63/98 (adopted Dec. 18, 2008), Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, **passed by a vote of 165-to-8**. A parallel resolution in 2007 passed by a vote of 156-to-7. A parallel resolution in 2006 passed by a vote of 157-to-9.
- Resolution 63/97 (adopted Dec. 18, 2008), Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan, **passed by a vote of 171-to-6**. A parallel resolution in 2007 passed by a vote of 165-to-7. A parallel resolution in 2006 passed by a vote of 162-to-8.
- Resolution 63/97 (adopted Dec. 18, 2008), Applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Occupied Territory, including Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories, **passed by a vote of 173-to-6**. A parallel resolution in 2007 passed by a vote of 169-to-6. A parallel resolution in 2006 passed by a vote of 165-to-7.

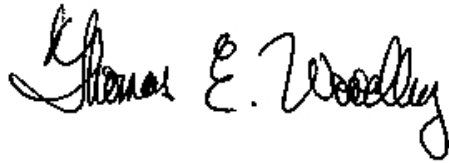
While the UN General Assembly votes decisively on these issues each year, action from the UN is stymied each year because the UN Security Council – the enforcement arm of the UN – refuses to intervene. This inaction is due to the political relationship between the United States and Israel: the United States typically vetoes Security Council resolutions which would put pressure on Israel to respect the norms of international law.

From its inception, MEC has advocated ethical source policies, and accountability on a number of social issues. Nevertheless, I am also aware that that MEC has tried to sidestep the issues I raise above by saying that it can only concern itself with the factory conditions of its suppliers. This is neither an ethically or legally tenable position. Aware that Source Vagabond Systems is a supplier to the Israeli Military makes MEC legally responsible according to the UN Human Rights Norms for Businesses. Aware of the overwhelming international consensus that the rights of Palestinians are being violated, MEC must respond ethically to the boycott call by Palestinian civil society.

For the reasons provided above, my organization is preparing to launch a boycott campaign focusing on MEC. I urge you to cease sourcing products from Israel, such that my organization and its adherents are not forced to follow this course of action. The action against Apartheid South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s did not begin with states, but with an outcry and action from civil society, and with the most ethical businesses being the first to participate in the boycott. May MEC continue to be a leader in ethical sourcing by being one of the leaders in the current boycott campaign.

Should you have questions about the justification for my organization's campaign, or about specifics of the Israel-Palestine conflict, I would be happy to provide you any information you may desire.

I look forward to your favourable response and to encouraging our adherents to do business with MEC as an ethical place of business once it has changed its policies vis-à-vis its Israeli suppliers.



Thomas E. Woodley  
President, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East

P.S. For your reference, I have enclosed a copy of Amnesty International's guide kit on the UN Human Rights Norms for Business.