« MADE IN ILLEGALITY »/
END ALL ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN BELGIUM AND THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS!
ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN FIGURES

- 250 Israeli settlements have been built on Occupied Palestinian Territory since 1967.
- 530,000 settlers in the West Bank, of whom 200,000 are in East Jerusalem.
- The settler population has more than doubled since the conclusion of the Oslo Accords in 1993.
- 80% of the water resources in the Palestinian territory are captured by the settlers.
- An Israeli settler consumes 6 times more water than a Palestinian.
- Each year, the Israeli government spends at least 330 million euros more in benefits for settlers than in benefits for citizens living in Israel.

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Source: TPO – OCHA 2012

- Red: Areas cultivated, fenced in or guarded by the Israeli army
- Orange: Areas within settlements’ local and regional councils
- Green: Green line
- Dark: Wall built or under construction
- Light: Planned Wall
Belgium, the European Union and its other member states have a duty and responsibility to take measures to stop the settlements and occupation policy of the Palestinian Territory by Israel.

The EU and Belgium regularly and unambiguously condemn Israel’s settlement policy. But, paradoxically, because of the scale of the economic and trade ties with the settlements, they contribute to support their economic and territorial development. This cannot go on any longer.

Because it is time that Belgium and the European Union:

▶ move from words to action,
▶ comply with their obligations with respect to international law and human rights,
▶ no longer participate in the economy of the Israeli settlements,
▶ no longer support, directly or indirectly, the expansion of the Israeli settlements.

Organisations signatory to this current “Made in Illegality” campaign demand that Belgium and the EU immediately cease all economic and trade links with the Israeli settlements.

“Belgian law must ban the import of products from the settlements”

“The ongoing trade between Belgium and European member states and the Israeli settlements strengthens the economy and territorial expansion of the settlements”

CARVING UP OF PALESTINE INTO AREAS A, B AND C
Following the 1993 Oslo Accords, the West Bank was divided into three administrative areas that were supposed to be temporary:

– “Area A”, placed under the civil and security control of the Palestinian Authority and covering only 18% of the West Bank,
– “Area B”, under civilian Palestinian control and under joint Israeli-Palestinian security control
– “Area C”, placed under the civil and military control of the Israeli government. This area covers 61% of the West Bank. This is where the Israeli settlements are concentrated, including the majority of the water resources, pastures and agricultural land. According to the Oslo Accords, this area should have been gradually evacuated by Israel.
Twenty years after the Oslo Accords, the objective of the creation of a Palestinian state, alongside the Israeli state, appears more out of reach than ever before. The confiscation of Palestinian lands in favour of Israeli settlements has been done on an unprecedented scale since their military occupation in 1967.

Despite the recognition of the illegality under international law of Israel’s settlement policy and unanimous condemnation from the international community, nothing has been done so far to stop it. The fact that international condemnations have never been accompanied by pressure measures against the Israeli government explains why they have never prevented Israel from pursuing its settlement policy. Even more seriously, it appears that the attitude of the EU and its member states, in their economic relations with the Israeli settlements, contribute to their expansion, and allow them to benefit considerably from trade with the European market.

The Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in July 2004 condemning the Wall in Palestinian territory, has recalled the legal obligations of third states not to recognise or render aid or assistance in maintaining an illegal situation and to ensure respect for international law. This legal arsenal is the foundation of this campaign to end all economic ties with the Israeli settlements. More and more decisions from EU member states (the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, etc) or others (Norway, New Zealand, etc) clearly reinforce the consideration of these obligations. The EU, through the European Commission, has also initiated the compliance of its policy with international law and European law by adopting, during the summer of 2013, guidelines that exclude funding Israeli entities in the settlements and the activities carried out there.

Palestinian, Israeli and international civil societies perform meticulous work to identify the public and private European entities that maintain financial, economic and trade relations with the Israeli settlements.

Today, Belgium must become aware of its legal obligations which prohibit it from participating in any way whatsoever in maintaining an illegal situation. These obligations involve breaking all financial, economic and trade ties with the Israeli settlements.

It is in this sense that the key measure recommended by the signatory organisations of the “Made in Illegality” campaign is the adoption of Belgian and European legislation banning the import of products from the settlements.

Other measures, detailed in the findings, consist in particular of:

- dissuading Belgian businesses from maintaining any kind of trade and investment ties with the settlements,
- excluding the settlements from bilateral accords and cooperation between Belgium and Israel.
Israel’s settlement policy is illegal and constitutes, in itself, a serious violation of international law, particularly with respect to Article 49 of the 1949 forth Geneva Convention which prohibits the occupying power from “proceeding with the deportation or transfer of one part of its own civilian population to the territory occupied by it” and by undermining the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Since the occupation of the Palestinian and Syrian territories, namely the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights in 1967, only the settlements in the Gaza Strip were evacuated and dismantled in 2005 for strategic reasons specific to Israel.

In the remaining territories, successive Israeli governments have pursued an active policy of occupying land and erecting settlements. Since the conclusion of the Oslo Accords in 1993, the Israeli population who has settled in the West Bank and East Jerusalem has more than doubled and now numbers more than 500,000 settlers among a Palestinian population of 2.5 million residents. In East Jerusalem, the number of settlers, around 200,000, has become almost equivalent to that of the 250,000 Palestinian residents.

In addition, various measures accompanying settlement, including providing the settlements with the infrastructure required to sustain them and for their expansion, in turn lead to breaches of international law and serious violations of the rights of the Palestinian people. Indeed, the construction of infrastructures, such as roads reserved for the settlers or the check-points to control the movements of the Palestinians lead to violations of human rights of the Palestinian population. Furthermore, to meet the economic needs of the settlers, Israel continues occupying farmland and monopolising the water resources in the region.

In July 2004, the ICJ found in favour of the illegality of the Wall, built by Israel in Palestinian territory mainly for the reason that its route was established in such a way so as to incorporate most of the settlements on the Israeli side, making 9.4% of the West Bank inaccessible to the Palestinian population and de facto annexing 51% of water resources.

The EU condemns the settlements, affirms its illegality and exhorts regularly that Israel put an end to them. But these calls have never deflected the inexorable will of settlement expansion of successive Israeli governments.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS OF 10 DECEMBER 2012:

“The European Union is deeply dismayed by Israeli plans to expand settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in particular the plans to extend the E1 zone and firmly opposes it. If implemented, the E1 zone project would seriously undermine the prospects for a negotiated settlement of the conflict by challenging the opportunities of seeing a contiguous and viable Palestinian state with Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. This could also lead to the forced displacement of civilian populations. True to its main objective, that is to say, a solution based on the coexistence of two states, the EU will closely monitor the situation and its general impact, and act accordingly. The European Union repeats that these settlements are illegal under international law and constitute an obstacle to peace.”
Significant economic life has unfolded in recent years in the Israeli settlements. It is based on the establishment of various industries, the development of agricultural production and the exploitation of the natural resources in Palestinian territory. And by ripple effect, the major economic activity of the settlements plays an undeniable role in the maintenance of settlement and their expansion.

Several attractive features encourage Israeli companies from the agro-industrial and industrial sectors to open businesses in the settlements. Subsidies are generously granted by the Israeli state: tax benefits, discounts on land ease, funds for research and development, etc. Not to mention the considerable funds invested by the government for the construction of infrastructure for the use by the settlers, including roads reserved for them and providing quick access to Israeli and foreign markets.

In its September 2012 report on the Palestinian economy, the World Bank estimated that given the number of agricultural settlements present especially in the Jordan Valley, the agricultural sector of the settlement economy is particularly flourishing. The Israeli NGO Kerem Navot says that in recent decades, Palestinians have lost a third of their agricultural land, partly because of the spoliations of settlers who have benefited from support from the Israeli state.

PILLAGE OF THE JORDAN VALLEY
Commonly known as the “breadbasket of Palestine” because of its humid climate particularly conducive to the cultivation of a wide range of gardening products throughout the year, the Jordan Valley has become one of the main breeding grounds of agricultural exploitation for the settlements.

Dates, olives, figs, citrus, melons, guavas, watermelons, grapes, peppers, cucumbers, onions, herbs, cherry tomatoes, eggplant and sweet potatoes are the main crops grown in Israeli settlements in the Jordan Valley, where greenhouses and farmland stretch out of sight. The majority of this production is earmarked for export. According to the World Bank, Palestinians no longer have access to 94% of the Jordan Valley. The Palestinians who live in this region situated in “Area C” face all the difficulties in the world to obtain permits to build houses, cultivate their land or access water supplies exploited by the agricultural settlements in the valley.

“37 Israeli settlements have been established in the Jordan Valley, which is the most fertile area with the richest resources of the West Bank. With respect to the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea region, 86% of these lands are under the de facto jurisdiction of the regional councils of the settlements, which prohibit the Palestinians from using them and prevent them from accessing their natural resources.”

UN Secretary General Report, September 2012.
A SETTLEMENT ENTERPRISE SERIOUSLY ADVERSE TO THE PALESTINIAN ECONOMY/

The monopolisation of economic activities in “Zone C” by the settlements, which represents 61% of the West Bank, is the main cause of the difficulties of the Palestinian economy. The settled Palestinian lands contain the majority of arable land, water supplies and other natural resources. The inability of Palestine to establish economic activity there leads, according to the World Bank, to a shortfall of about $3.4 billion, ie 85% of the Palestinian GDP. While exports represented more than half of the Palestinian GDP during the 1980s, they have now fallen below 15%.

Therefore, many Palestinians have little choice but to find work in the settlements which are precisely the cause of their lack of perspective within Palestinian society.

In 2012, 22,955 work permits were issued in the settlements principally in the construction, agricultural and industrial sectors. According to a study led in 2013 by the Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD) on Palestinian workers in the settlements, it shows that:

► 65% of the respondents are exposed to toxic substances that have an impact on their health,
► only 11% have job security,
► 77% are hired on a daily basis,
► 50% do not have health insurance,
► Palestinians work in the settlements for an average salary of $2 to $4.8 per hour, while the minimum wage in Israel is $6 per hour.

EXPULSION OF THE JAHALINS IN FAVOUR OF THE MISHOR ADUMIM INDUSTRIAL ZONE

In 1975, after construction of the Maale Adumim settlement, Israel expropriated 3,000 hectares of land in the zone where the Jahalin Bedouins lived. During the next few years, it expropriated and destroyed homes and property belonging to the Jahalins to erect the Mishor Adumim industrial park. In 1991, Israel gave Maale Adumim city status and continued with its expansion. Three years later, the civil administration ordered the expulsion of dozens of Jahalin families who had settled on land reserved for a new neighbourhood of the settlement. Today, the Maale Adumim settlement, which extends 7 kilometres east of Jerusalem, is the third largest West Bank settlement with about 40,000 Israeli settlers. The Mishor Adumim industrial zone is home to major production in the plastics, cement, leather tanning, detergents and aluminium sectors. And it is at this location that the largest factory of the company Soda Stream manufactures its famous machinery for carbonated beverages.
The economic and trade ties between the EU and Israel are very important. The European Union is the main export destination for Israeli goods. In 2010, the Israeli association Who Profits estimated that Israel had exported fruits and vegetables for a total value of 2.1 billion dollars, of which 66% went to the European Union Market. These ties include a considerable share of products from the settlements. Mehadrin, Arava Export Growers, and Hadiklaim are some of the largest export companies of fruits and vegetables to the EU which operate in the settlements. According to the report "Trading Away Peace" published by a group of 22 European NGOs in October 2012, the European Union is also the main export market for two Israeli manufacturing companies located in the settlements, Ahava (cosmetics) and Soda Stream (manufacturer of machinery for carbonated beverages).

The exact volume of trade between the European Union, Belgium and the settlements is however difficult to establish, taking into account the fact that Israel, which considers that the settlements are part of its territory, indicates the origin of all its exported products as being "Made in Israel". This is very problematic since pursuant to the association agreement concluded between the EU and Israel, only Israeli products are eligible for preferential customs tariffs. But in practice, given that state import controls are not systematic, a large portion of products from the settlements also benefit from preferential tariffs.

Numerous Israeli products likely to come from the Israeli settlements are sold in Belgium (fruits, vegetables, wines, manufactured products, etc). These products are systematically labelled "Made in Israel". But a survey of major retailers and importing companies demonstrated that they were not able to certify that these products do not come from the settlements. Among the manufactured products from the settlements, there are, for example, the Soda Stream carbonators manufactured in the Maale Adumim settlement, which are sold by twenty retailers in Belgium. According to Soda Stream, approximately 400,000 families in Belgium own its appliances. Also, these require that you purchase gas refills and syrups on a regular basis, also produced in Maale Adumim.

The label "Made in Israel" also poses a problem vis-à-vis the Belgian and European consumer. It misleads the consumer while there exists European legislation guaranteeing the right to information for consumers. The British and Danish governments have thus adopted directives requiring that retail distributors correctly indicate the origin of Israeli products so that consumers may exercise their right to be duly informed about the product they purchase. In Great Britain, these directives pushed the Co-op supermarkets to exclude products from the settlements from their shelves.

The bitter wine from the settlements
The Israeli wine market is controlled by six wineries which all own, without exception, vineyards in the Syrian (Golan Heights) and/or Palestinian Occupied Territories. Five out of these six wineries operate vineyards located in the Palestinian territories: Carmel Winery, Barkan Winery, Teperberge 1870 Winery, Binyamina and Tishbi Estate Winery. With the exception of a few brands, it is impossible to distinguish the wines made from grapes grown in Israel from wines for which vineyards in the Occupied Palestinian Territories have been exploited.
EUROPEAN COMPANIES THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE SETTLEMENT POLICY/

Beyond trade with the settlements, some international companies operate in the settlements, particularly by providing their services and contributing to the construction of their infrastructure. Among them are:

- **G4S**, a British-Danish multinational which supplies through its Israeli subsidiary services and security equipment to Israeli command centres, prisons where Palestinian political prisoners are detained in Israel and private companies in the settlements,
- **Alstom** and **Veolia**, French multinationals, involved, since 2004, in the tramway project which links Jerusalem with the neighbouring settlements, in violation of international law.

In Belgium, the banking group **Dexia SA**, of which the Belgian state is a majority shareholder, is also directly involved in the financing of the settlements through its Israeli subsidiary **Dexia Israel**. Despite the campaigns of which the group was the subject and its declarations of separation from its subsidiary, **Dexia SA** is still linked to **Dexia Israel** which continues to finance the Israeli settlements particularly through loans given to municipalities

SOME “MADE IN ILLEGALITY” PRODUCTS SOLD IN BELGIUM

- 40% of the herbs exported by Israel are grown in the Jordan Valley. 80% are exported to Europe.
- 70% of the grapes grown in the settlements in the Jordan Valley are exported. They represent half of the total quantity of grapes exported by Israel.
- 5% of the Israeli avocados are grown in the Jordan Valley.
- About 40% of the dates exported by Israel are grown in the Jordan Valley. Half of the dates of the Mejool variety produced in the world are grown in Israel. 51% come from the Jordan Valley.
- Flowers are also grown on a large scale in the Jordan Valley and are exported to Europe via the Netherlands where they are auctioned and repackaged, sometimes with their origin not being indicated.
- The majority of pomegranates, 22% of the almonds, 13% of the olives, 5% of the nectarines and 3% of the peaches exported to Europe are grown in the West Bank settlements.

*The relationships between Belgium and the economy of the Israeli occupation, Report, Katarzyna Lemanska, August 2014.*
The report drafted by François Dubuisson, professor of international law at the University of Brussels (ULB), titled “The International Obligations of the European Union and its Member States with regard to Economic Relations with Israeli Settlements”, published in February 2014, establishes the responsibility of states to not assist in the prosperity of the Israeli settlements. Through a careful analysis of the state of international law, this report highlights clearly and unmistakably three obligations for third state parties to cease all economic relations with Israeli entities which would contribute to the maintenance or recognition of the illegal situation resulting from the settlements.

1. Ensure respect for international humanitarian law
The first of these obligations is the one laid down by Article 1 of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention which establishes that party states shall "ensure respect" for international humanitarian law. In this case, it is for the EU and its member states to take the necessary measures to ensure Israeli compliance with prohibiting the settlements. The implementation of this obligation must be reflected in particular by the refusal to import products from the settlements. Professor F. Dubuisson notes that the goal of stopping the violations related to the settlements is inconsistent with the fact of doing business with entities which reflect this illegality since, by doing so, they contribute to the economic prosperity of these settlements.

2. Not to recognise an illegal situation as legitimate
This customary obligation of international law was reaffirmed in particular by the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ on the Wall. It aims not only to prohibit any official recognition of an illegal situation, but also any act which would involve such recognition. It shows that the EU and its member states cannot develop an economic relationship with Israel that is likely to accept the authority of Israel on Palestinian land or to give legal effect to settlement activities. If the implementation of this obligation by the EU has not always been rigorous, evidence suggests that the EU is taking it more and more into account, following the increasing pressure from civil society. In July 2013, the European Commission took a major step by adopting Guidelines which "seek to ensure compliance with the positions and commitments adopted by the EU in accordance with international law regarding the non-recognition by the Union of Israeli sovereignty over the occupied territories since June 1967". More specifically, through the Guidelines, the EU undertakes to exclude the settlements from "awards, financial instruments or grants" funded by the EU. It will therefore interpret and evaluate the implementation of these Guidelines in light of the obligation of non-recognition.

3. Not to render aid or assistance to the maintenance of an illegal situation
This last obligation not to render aid or assistance targets the behaviours that help the responsible state to maintain a situation that continues to violate international law. Before being reaffirmed in the Opinion of the ICJ on the Wall, this requirement also appears in the resolution of the UN Security Council in March 1980, which called upon "all states not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically for the settlements in the occupied territories."

According to Professor Dubuisson, “by allowing the import and marketing of products from the settlements on their territory, the states of the European Union undoubtedly contribute to the economic prosperity of the settlements, and thus provide "aid or assistance" in maintaining the illegal situation..."
created by Israel’s settlement policy.” The application of the obligation of not to render aid or assistance supposes therefore that the EU and Belgium not maintain any trade ties with the settlements.

According to what has been mentioned above, it appears patently that the marketing of products from the settlements by EU member states contribute to the economic prosperity of the settlements, and thus undoubtedly provide aid and/or assistance in maintaining the illegal situation created by Israel’s settlement policy.

OBLIGATIONS GRADUALLY TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION/

By adopting the Guidelines that exclude European funding for Israeli entities in the settlements and for the activities conducted therein, the EU showed that it was aware of its obligations regarding international and European law.

It is a start, but it is insufficient in relation to the need to take measures that are likely to effectively influence Israel’s settlement policy.

In Europe and elsewhere, countries are also taking measures aimed at complying with international law. Lately, Norway, New Zealand, Sweden and the Netherlands have thus excluded from their public pension funds Israeli companies involved in the settlements, citing international obligations to justify their decision.
CONCLUSIONS AND DEMANDS/

From the foregoing and from all the legal obligations indicated above, the duty and responsibility of the Belgian State arise directly:

- to ensure that its policy does not directly or indirectly support the perpetuation and expansion of the settlements,
- to take the necessary measures to put an end to all ties between its economy and the economy of Israel's settlement policy.

In this context, the signatory organisations require and press the Belgian government to adopt the following measures:

- **Ban the import of products from the settlements.**
  Belgium must act in accordance with its statements of condemnation of Israel’s settlement policy and especially to comply with its obligations under international law not to recognise the legality of the settlements and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining this illegal situation. The legal opinion of Professor Dubuisson recalls in this respect that European law allows Belgium to adopt a measure excluding the import of products from the settlements unilaterally so long as this action is justified for reasons of “public morality, public policy or public security.” This measure does not violate either the provisions of the World Trade Organization. Belgium should also work at the European level to ensure that a general measure banning products from the settlements and trade with the settlements be adopted by the EU.

- **Exclude the settlements from bilateral accords and cooperation with Israel.**
  The Belgian government and all levels of jurisdictions in the area of cooperation must adopt clear territorial provisions restricting the territory of Israel from any bilateral accord and explicitly excluding any Israeli entity established or operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The European Union adopted during the summer of 2013 Guidelines for this purpose. Belgium must transpose such directives to any agreement with Israel.

PROHIBITING THE MARKETING OF ILLEGALLY HARVESTED WOOD IN EUROPE: A PRECEDENT TO BE FOLLOWED
To fight against the illegal exploitation of forests around the world, including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Cameroon, etc, the Regulation of 20 October 2010 of the European Parliament and the Council bans the placing on the EU market of illegally harvested wood and derived products. Since 3 March 2013, the Regulation is binding upon all members states of the EU. Such an arrangement is perfectly applicable to the case of products from the settlements, whose harvesting or manufacturing conditions can also be said to be in violation of applicable legal standards, namely international humanitarian law, human rights, permanent sovereignty over natural resources and the right to self-determination.
Dissuade Belgian businesses from investing and maintaining any kind of trade ties with the Israeli settlements.

According to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, governments must provide recommendations to companies in order that they act in respect of human rights in all their activities. The Guidelines also require that companies exercise reasonable due diligence in the area of human rights, including through the adoption of measures necessary to prevent or terminate their participation when it contributes or can contribute to a negative impact on human rights. Similar to what has been done in Great Britain and Denmark, the Belgian government should therefore adopt legislation requiring importers and other companies in Belgium not to conclude any trade, economic or financial agreement with entities present or operating in the Israeli settlements.

Other supplementary measures must be adopted:

- exclude companies established or operating in the settlements from public contracts and calls for tender,
- deter Belgian and European citizens from acquiring property in the settlements,
- formulate directives aimed at tour operators to avoid any form of support for businesses and tourist attractions in the settlements or operated by them.

A GROWING NUMBER OF EXAMPLES OF STATES RELYING ON INTERNATIONAL LAW TO DETER THEIR NATIONAL ACTORS FROM DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE SETTLEMENTS

- In 2011, the German Ministry of Transport intervened to convince the railway company Deutsche Bahn to withdraw from the railway project connecting the settlements in Jerusalem to Tel Aviv;
- In 2012, in agreement with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the president of Roskilde University decided to terminate a research programme with the university of the settlement of Ariel;
- In 2013, the Dutch government warned the company Royal Haskoning DHV that its participation in a wastewater treatment project in the settlements in East Jerusalem would be in violation of international law.
- The Dutch company withdrew its collaboration by justifying its decision out of concern for international law.
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION/ www.madeinillegality.org

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Signatory/ Association belgo-palestinië, Broederlijk Delen, CGSP wallonne, CNAPD, CSC, FGTB-ABVV, FOS, intal, La Centrale générale-FGTB, LDH, MOC, Palestina Solidariteit vzw, Pax Christi Vlaanderen, Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles, Solidarité Socialiste, URJ, Vrede vzw, Vredesactie

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