

# BOYCOTT SETTLEMENT GOODS

## WORKING CONDITIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Palestinians in the Occupied Territories live in conditions of severe economic hardship, with their simplest daily movements restricted by the Israeli military and their basic human rights denied.

*Breaking the Silence*, a human rights group composed of former Israeli soldiers, has stated that “cases of abuse towards Palestinians [in the Occupied Territories], looting, and destruction of property, have been the norm for years [with soldiers] controlling the population’s everyday life”.

Former Irish President Mary Robinson described conditions in the occupied territories as “severe”, while Archbishop Desmond Tutu called them “humiliating” and even worse than the treatment of black South Africans under apartheid.

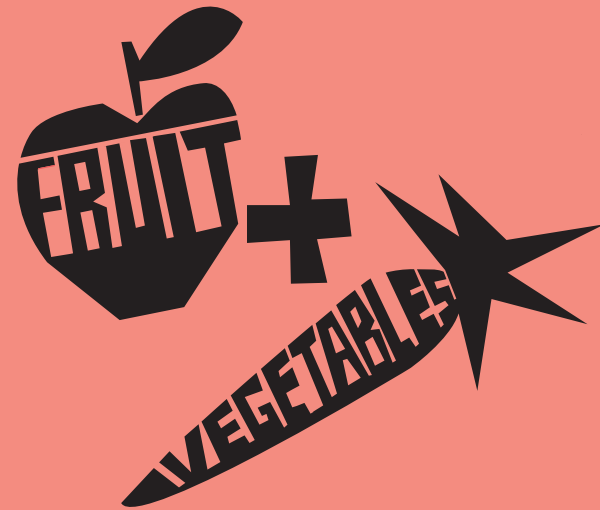
Over 100,000 Palestinians work in Israel or the settlements. While the Palestinian minimum wage of 1,450.

New Israeli Shekels (NIS) (€308) per month is reportedly observed by four-fifths of the formal economy, the minimum wage for work in Israel is NIS 4,300 (€913), meaning Palestinian workers are paid significantly less (ILO, 2014).

Around 35,000 Palestinians are thought to work in Israel without permits, making them vulnerable to exploitation.

A Palestinian working in Israel can expect to earn more than twice what he or she would earn in the West Bank or Gaza. (ILO, 2014)

When surveyed 82% of Palestinians working in settlements said that they would leave their jobs if they had the chance, but couldn’t because of the imposed under-development of the Palestinian economy.



## STANDING UP FOR PALESTINE

Congress believes the occupation must end to enable a functioning, democratic State of Palestine which includes the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem.

It is Congress policy to work at national and international level to force Israel to comply with international law. We maintain pressure on the Irish Government to seek action at EU and international level and we support the campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS).

It is through this campaign that we are calling on members to boycott goods produced within settlements in the Occupied Territories:

- 1. Don't purchase goods produced in the illegal settlements. Educate yourself and colleagues/friends/family on what you are buying.**

As there is no legally-binding and accurate labeling, it is difficult to determine if products originate from the settlements. Settlement goods are occasionally labeled as 'Israeli settlement produce'. It is highly likely that across the

sector some of the oranges, dates, grapes, herbs, avocados, peppers, potatoes and other fresh produce on sale are also being sourced from the settlements. Manufactured goods, including toys, home carbonated drinks makers, plastic goods and cosmetics are also available for purchase in Ireland.

- 2. Learn more about the BDS movement – a call by Palestinian Civil Society for a campaign of boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it complies with international law and Palestinian rights. <http://www.bdsmovement.net/>**

- 3. Ask your local shops if they stock Settlement goods and if so request them to remove them from the shelves. Follow up with letter to the HQ of the retailer.**

- 4. Promote the Congress campaign within your union/workplace.**

For more information on our campaign and how to identify products from the illegal settlements please go to our website.

[www.ictu.ie/palestine/](http://www.ictu.ie/palestine/)

Following motions at a number of Congress Biennial Delegate Conferences, it is Congress policy to work at national and international level to defend human rights.

We call on Israel to end the occupation of Palestine, its construction of illegal settlements and annexation of Palestinian land.

We also call all trade union members to support our campaign and boycott goods produced in the Occupied Territories.



There is evidence to suggest that some Settlement products enter the European market bearing the Israeli barcode. If you see this barcode ask the retailer are they sure it is not from the Settlements?

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# THE OCCUPATION

United Nation's policy is for the creation of a viable Palestinian state which would include the West Bank and the Gaza strip and have East Jerusalem as its capital.

Palestine is recognised by a majority of the world's nations and achieved observer status at the UN in 2012.

The continuing occupation and effective annexation of increasing parts of these territories by Israel—in contravention of international law—undermines the viability of a future Palestinian State and has made everyday life unimaginably difficult for the Palestinian population.

The UN has repeatedly demanded Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories, which it annexed in 1967. Israel withdrew military forces from Gaza in 2005, but still controls access by land, sea and air and is defined as the occupying power.

For the Palestinian people, occupation has meant the forceful appropriation and relentless settlement of their lands by Israeli settlers under the protection of the Israeli armed forces, activities defined as war crimes under the Geneva Convention.

There are over half-a-million Israeli settlers now living in the Occupied Territories and a majority of the land is under full Israeli military and administrative control (Area C, ILO 2014).

The illegal Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the blockade of Gaza, have been accompanied by extraordinary violence which since 2000 has killed over 5,000 Palestinians, injured and maimed many tens of thousands, led to further thousands imprisoned and left the civil infrastructure of Gaza, including schools, hospitals, transport, sewage systems, in ruins.

2,251 Palestinians were killed in the latest Israeli assault on Gaza, from July-August 2014, while 73 Israelis died, (Source UN [www.ochaopt.org](http://www.ochaopt.org)).

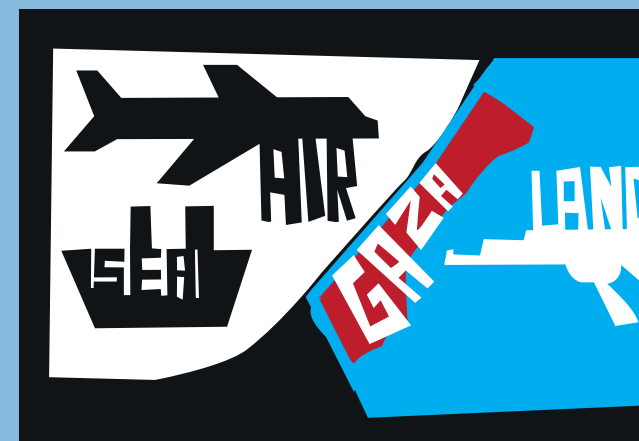
Just over 20 years ago a historic agreement was signed by Israel and Palestinian representatives in Oslo, which was described as a 'Road Map' to the establishment of a Palestinian State. The agreement was billed as the beginning of the end of the occupation. But in reality little has changed.

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## THE GAZA STRIP

On the west coast, almost two million people in the Gaza Strip—the vast majority refugees expelled from Israel in 1948, and their descendants—continue to live under blockade by land, sea and air, in an area just one third the size of Co. Dublin.

Gaza is now the most densely populated area in the world. The blockade has persisted for more than seven years and is illegal under international law. It has utterly destroyed Gaza's economy—with 80 per cent of Gazans now dependent on humanitarian aid for food and daily necessities (ILO, 2014).



In 1988 the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) declared its recognition of the Israeli State and accepted the UN designated territories—just 22% of the original Palestine—as the basis for the future Palestinian State. But the illegal annexation and settlement of Palestinian land continues apace—with the number of settlers doubling since that time.

The situation seriously deteriorated in 2002 when Israel began construction of a “separation barrier” along the western line of the West Bank, which annexes further territory, imprisons entire towns, divides communities and separates Palestinian farmers from their lands. The building of this fortified structure was condemned by the International Court of Justice, which stated that it “severely impedes the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination” and demanded it be dismantled.

In 2007, a Congress delegation met with a wide range of groups—including Hamas—and argued that indiscriminate attacks on civilian population centres on all sides were wrong and must end.

The Israeli government refused to recognize a new Palestinian Unity Government formed in early 2014, which included Hamas, and announced plans to build thousands of additional houses in illegal settlements.

This led to the collapse of peace negotiations and was condemned by governments in the west. Former EU foreign spokesperson Catherine Ashton has described the settlements as, “...illegal under international law... and an obstacle to peace.” When construction on approved settlements is completed, they will sever East Jerusalem—which Israel has declared its intention to annex—from the rest of the West Bank, thus ending the territorial continuity needed for a viable Palestinian state (ILO, 2014).

Israeli actions in Palestine breach over 70 UN Security Council Resolutions, but Western inaction has meant that it has been free to act with impunity.