



DON'T BUY INTO THE OCCUPATION

PIEN opposes the sale of Israeli settlement goods in Australia

“Enough is enough. No more words without deeds. It’s time for action.”

These words were issued nearly eight years ago as part of a statement by a [World Council of Churches gathering](#), and affirmed recently by a meeting of senior Palestinian Christians and their supporters in the [Kairos Palestine 5th Anniversary statement](#), which noted that things have become worse, not better, for Palestinians since then. These words stirred us into action when we met earlier this year as the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network (PIEN) to consider our future priorities.

As we prayerfully considered our options, it became clear that we needed to take a decisive step. We have heard the [cry of Palestinian Christians asking the international community to join boycott and divestment campaigns](#). We have seen Churches internationally respond to the request. We have seen many Jewish people support these nonviolent economic strategies. We believe, with deep conviction, that the products made in the illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank represent a serious and blatant disregard for Palestinian human rights, and must be opposed.

We have therefore decided that PIEN will join others in responding with more than words, and this year we will focus our efforts on campaigning for businesses in Australia to stop selling settlement goods, beginning with dates.

We ask you to join us in our call to action, as people of faith, in moving from words to action.

Following is some more information about our campaign and why we are undertaking it.

CALL TO ACTION **Help us find dates being sold from illegal Israeli settlements**

PIEN’s first campaign will focus on dates sold in Australia from Israeli settlements. We’ve identified one importer, and are negotiating directly with them to stop these imports. But we want to see who else is selling and/or importing these dates – and we’re looking for your help. [Find out more.](#)

Excerpts from World Council of Churches Statement

Amman, Jordan, 20 June 2007

“Almost sixty years have passed since the Christian churches first spoke with one voice about Arab-Israeli peace. For the last forty years the Christian churches have called for an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. In the very place where Jesus Christ walked upon the earth, walls now separate families and the children of God – Christian, Muslim and Jew – are imprisoned in a deepening cycle of violence, humiliation and despair. The Palestinian Christians from Gaza to Jerusalem and to Nazareth, have called out to their brothers and sisters in Christ with this urgent plea: “Enough is enough. No more words without deeds. It is time for action”...And we representatives of Christian churches and church-related organizations from every corner of the earth, we respond: **Yes, we will.**

Together we will act and pray and speak and work and risk reputations and lives to build with you bridges for an enduring peace among the peoples of this tortured and beautiful place - Palestine and Israel - to end these decades of injustice, humiliation and insecurity, to end the decades of living as refugees and under occupation. We will work with you to seek peace and pursue it. We have allowed too much time to pass. Time has not served the cause of peace but has served the cause of extremism. This is our urgent cause that cannot wait.”



WHY WE SHOULDN'T BUY GOODS MADE IN ILLEGAL ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

Settlements are Jewish only communities established on Palestinian land in the Occupied West Bank. Together, settlements and outposts control, and exclude Palestinians from, approximately 42% of the total land area of the West Bank, effectively precluding any realisation of a viable Palestinian State. Despite widespread [criticism of the settlements](#), and [calls for Israel to withdraw from them](#), the Israeli Government continues to not only retain but also expand settlements. The [Israeli Prime Minister](#) continues to reiterate Israeli policy of expanding settlements to make a contiguous and viable Palestinian State impossible.

The settlements are maintained by the presence of thousands of soldiers, hundreds of checkpoints, road-closures, Israeli-only roads through the West Bank and so much more, and have massive negative impacts on Palestinians' daily lives.

Settlements are authorised by the Israeli Government, have approved planning schemes, and receive the same (and in some cases greater) benefits and services as the Israeli towns within Israel's pre-1967 land. Some settlement "blocs" are huge, modern, multi-storied mini-cities. By 2013 there were some 138 official Israeli settlements with more than 550,000 settler residents. Israel's Government frequently announces plans for settlement expansion and has done so repeatedly since 2013 including in areas close to Jerusalem and Bethlehem. In addition to the "official" settlements, there are approximately 100 unofficial "outpost" settlements located throughout the West Bank, built without official approval, but with financial support from Israeli ministries and agencies. Although these outposts are illegal under both Israeli and international law, Israel provides most of them with state funded military protection and access to water, electricity, and other basic services. Settlers in outposts pressure the Israeli Government, often successfully, to "upgrade" them to full settlement status, often by adding them to nearby official settlements.

Israel undertakes significant agricultural and industrial activity within the settlement areas. As with housing, there are many Government incentives for establishing businesses there. In the Jordan Valley, the most fertile region of the West Bank, Israel has allocated 86% of the land to settlements. There is also minimal business regulation, and frequently there are concerning reports about workers' rights, most recently a Human Rights Watch report about [exploitative use of Palestinian child labour](#).

These settlements in the Occupied West Bank are illegal because they violate international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention to which Israel and most other countries are party. The [United Nations Security Council](#), the [United Nations General Assembly](#), the [International Committee of the Red Cross](#), the [International Court of Justice](#) and all Parties to the Convention, except Israel, have affirmed that the Fourth Geneva Convention does apply to all the Palestinian Territories occupied by Israel. Article 49 of the Convention provides that an occupier may not transfer any of its own civilian population into the Occupied Territory. Settlements are a systematic and deliberate transfer of a population.

Despite constant criticism of the existence and expansion of these settlements, Israel ignores these calls.

*Information in this section was sourced from two reputable organisations we recommend for more information:
the (Quaker) American Friends Service Committee, and the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem.*



EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES TO SETTLEMENT GOODS AND THEIR LABELLING

Since 2013 [European Union guidelines](#) have explicitly forbidden any funding of or other agreements with organisations inside Israeli settlements. [European Foreign Ministers](#) are currently seeking to ensure any products made in Israeli settlements and sold in Europe are clearly labelled as such.

In December 2013 the [British Government issued a warning](#) to businesses trading with Israeli settlements about the legal and financial risks of such trade, and said they neither encourage nor support such trade.

CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS OF BOYCOTTS

The [ACT Alliance](#) is a global alliance of over 100 churches and church related organisations, focussed on humanitarian assistance. The Alliance's Palestine Forum strongly supports an Israeli settlement boycott campaign. The Forum's approach to settlements includes recognising that:

- Boycotts apply pressure on Israel to respect and comply with international law, honour and apply universal principles of human rights, and work towards a genuinely just peace.
- Illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories cause harm and poverty to Palestinians, and are an obstacle to peace in the region.
- Despite their illegality, the settlements have grown and prospered under Israel's protection, with the production and sale of settlement goods helping to bolster their economies and contribute to their permanence.
- The campaign for boycotting settlement goods must be shaped by a focus on the human rights of all Palestinians, including refugees, those under occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as those living in pre-1967 Israel.

Since a decision by the United Church of Canada in 2012 to endorse a settlement boycott, they have undertaken a campaign they have called [Unsettling Goods](#). For Easter 2015 the Church produced written and video resources – [Let's keep talking](#) – for people grappling with questions about boycotts, refuting that boycotts are anti-Semitic.



WORLDWIDE CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH RESPONSES TO GOODS FROM ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

CHRISTIAN RESPONSES

2001, 2005 & 2009: World Council of Churches recognised need for settlement boycotts

The Council says that churches must not be complicit in illegal activities in Occupied Territory. It also recognises the need for an international boycott of settlement products and services, for member churches to inform themselves about settlement products imported into their countries, and for churches to practise morally responsible investment in order to influence businesses linked to the Israeli occupation and its illegal settlements.

Jan 2003: Anglican Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu called for a full boycott of Israel

The Archbishop encouraged the international community to treat Israel as it did South Africa during the apartheid regime, and called for people of faith to take up boycotts as a form of moral pressure.

Dec 2009: Palestinian Christians call for action including boycotts and sanctions through Kairos Palestine document

Palestinian Christians released a statement in 2009 called Kairos Palestine as a “word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering”. They call for action from the international community including *the beginning of a system of economic sanctions and boycott*. The Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem signed a covering note supporting the call.

July 2010: National Council of Churches in Australia invited a settlement goods boycott

A resolution passed at the Council’s *National Forum* called on its member Churches and the wider Australian community to consider a boycott of goods produced by Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

July 2011: Uniting Church in Australia supported a boycott of settlement products

The Church’s Assembly Standing Committee resolved, on behalf of the Assembly, to join a boycott of products produced in the illegal Israeli Settlements within the Palestinian Territory of the West Bank.

March 2008: American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), adopted an investment ‘screen’

The AFSC resolved that: *Investments should not be made in any company that provides products or services, including financial services, to Israeli Governmental or military bodies ... or to Israeli or Palestinian organizations or groups that are used to facilitate or undertake violent acts against civilians or violations of international law.*

July 2012: Methodist Conference (UK) called on British Government to end trade with Israeli settlements

The Conference noted the illegality of the Israeli settlements and called on the Government to end the trade in products from those settlements.

Sept 2012: Report on “Trading away Peace” by 22 European Christian organisations

The report recommended a series of measures to ensure trade with settlements is ended, stating that: *The many linkages with settlements are inconsistent with Europe’s obligations under international law, which stipulates that third parties, including European Governments, have the duty not to recognise, aid or assist settlements as well as the duty to effectively oppose them.*

2012: Quakers divested from companies Hewlett Packard, VEOLIA and Caterpillar

The Society of Friends (Quakers), through Friends Fiduciary, decided to divest from these three companies which profit from their operations in Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestine.



March 2013: United Church of Canada (UCC) launched “Unsettling Goods” campaign

The 41st General Council of the UCC in August 2012 called on United Church members to take concrete actions to support the end of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian Territories. This led to the Church's *Unsettling Goods* campaign which encourages members not to buy products made in settlements, and for retailers to cease stocking them. To date the campaign has focussed on three companies: Ahava, Keter Plastic and SodaStream.

March 2014: United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (USA) issued a call to boycott SodaStream

Although the United Methodist Church does not support a boycott of products made in Israel, it is opposed to products made by Israeli companies operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

June 2014: Presbyterian Church (USA) divested from Hewlett Packard, Motorola and Caterpillar

The Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly in Detroit resolved to divest its holdings from three US corporations – Hewlett Packard, Motorola Solutions and Caterpillar – on the basis of their well-documented record of complicity in the oppression and denial of the human rights of Palestinians. The resolution led the Church to direct the divestment of its \$21 million holdings in these companies.

JEWISH RESPONSES

The widespread take up of Jewish people engaging in boycotts, both of settlement products and more broadly have been documented in recent news articles. The following represent just a few examples.

1997: Israeli group Gush Shalom lists settlement goods in order to promote a boycott of such

Israeli group Gush Shalom led by prominent Israeli peace activist and former Knesset member Uri Avneity estimates that

tens of thousands of Israelis choose not to buy goods from the settlements.

2003: Jewish Voice for Peace (USA) calls for boycott of goods manufactured or distributed from settlements

Jewish Voice for Peace is a US wide organisation that estimates it has 100,000 online activists. In 2002 they stated that *Jewish Voice for Peace calls for the boycott of Israeli products manufactured in the occupied territories, or distributed by Israeli companies based there.* Since that time, Jewish Voice for Peace has issued a statement of support for the whole boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign regarding Israel, making clear that to boycott goods from Israel is not anti-Semitic.

2010: Australian Jewish Democratic Society (AJDS) gives support to boycotts focussed on ending the occupation

Their statement gives support for selected boycotts designed to bring about an end to the Israeli occupation, blockade and settlement on Palestinian lands lying outside of the June 1967 Israeli borders. In 2013 AJDS initiated a campaign *don't buy settlement products* which encouraged Jewish communities not to buy products made in settlements.

2010: European Jews for a Just Peace issues statement supporting full boycotts of Israel

European Jews for a Just Peace (EJJP) is a federation of Jewish groups in ten European countries. They recall the years of breaches of international law by Israel in their statement which declares: *the EJJP recognises the value of the BDS call from Palestinian civil society as a useful non-violent tool in its struggle against the Occupation; that EJJP joins the BDS to pressure the European Parliament and each European Government to live up to their obligations towards international law and Human Rights.*



PALESTINE ISRAEL
ECUMENICAL NETWORK

CALL TO ACTION

Help us find dates being sold in Australia from illegal Israeli settlements

Dates that are grown and processed in illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank are now being sold in Australia. We're asking you to help us find how widely they are being sold.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR DATES SOLD UNDER THE BRAND NAMES:

- Jordan River
- Jordan River Bio-Top
- King Solomon



These dates are marketed as Produce of Israel, but this is grossly misleading. Dates sold under these brand names come from the [Hadiklaim - Israel Date Growers Cooperative](#), Israel's largest date exporter. Many of their dates originate from illegal settlements in Occupied Palestine, and are processed in packing houses in Occupied Palestine – in both the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea areas.

We have found dates from settlements currently being sold in Melbourne (as pictured). We are making contact with the importer asking them to cease importing these products. If they don't agree, then we'll be asking for your help to put pressure on them by boycotting their dates and urging others to do so too. We are also trying to identify alternative sources of dates for sale in Australia.

ACTION REQUEST

Please visit your local supermarket, boutique grocer, organic food store or Middle Eastern stockist to see where their dates are coming from. Let us know whether you find any you think might be coming from Occupied Palestine. If any dates are labelled "Made in Israel", please ask the managers if they know whether the dates are coming from Israel or from illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Please send us all the information you find out.

Also ask the retailers for the names of their suppliers of dates and encourage them to change to dates not produced or processed in Israeli settlements.

If, as well as dates, you happen to discover any other products being sold near you that are, or may be, Israeli settlement products, please find out as much about them as you can and tell us.

Please send any information to: contact@pien.org.au, or call Jessica on 0431 519 577