

## Israeli Settlements - Briefing for Lobby

Israel's Government claims the status of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza strip and the Syrian Golan Heights is 'disputed'. But this view flies in the face of international law. In fact, no state recognises Israel's right to continue to hold these occupied territories.

The rights of a people living under occupation are guaranteed under Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (to which Israeli is a signatory) which states "**the occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.**" To do so is a war crime. However, since 1967, successive Israeli governments have pursued a policy of building and expanding colonies (or 'settlements') in the occupied territories. The largest of these are Ariel – currently 18,000 and the Prime Minister has just rubber stamped plans for further expansion – and Maale Adumim (35,000 inhabitants).

These colonies – in addition to being illegal - are acknowledged by the UN, the EU and the UK Government to threaten the prospects of a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians.

The UK government condemns settlements but continues to allow UK companies to import goods from them and provide services to them, thus encouraging their continuing existence and expansion.

Companies in the European Union import goods worth at least **230 million euros** from illegal Israeli settlements, fifteen times more than from Palestinian companies.

### Examples of companies trading with Israeli settlements

Mehadrin: an Israeli agricultural export company that provides produce to UK supermarkets and has a close relationship with Tesco. It is involved in the theft of Palestinian water, in co-operation with the Israeli state water company Mekorot. Mehadrin has a wholly owned state UK subsidiary and UK premises.

SodaStream: a private Israeli company, has its main production facilities in the Israeli settlement of Mishor Adumim. SodaStream products are sold by several major UK retailers.

G4S: a UK private security company provides services and equipment to Israeli checkpoints, and also to Israeli jails where children and adults are detained without trial and routinely tortured and mistreated.

All states, individually and acting in groups have the legal obligations set out in International Law Commission (ILC) Article 41 '*....not to recognise i.e. give legal sanction to, the illegal situation created by Israel, **nor to render aid or assistance in maintaining that situation***'

### We are asking the UK government to:

meet its obligations under international law and NOT to give aid to the settlements:

1. introduce legislation forbidding (i) the sale of goods produced in settlements, and (ii) goods manufactured by companies which operate in settlements
2. produce guidance that UK companies should not operate in settlements and that doing so may constitute legal complicity with Israeli violations of international law

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**The Co-operative Group** has taken the step of ending trade with companies that export produce from Israeli settlements. Since 2012 it **'no longer engages with any supplier of produce known to be sourcing from Israeli settlements'**

**Companies and institutions which operate in settlements and receive EU funding:**

Israel participates in a research programme (FP7) which is administered by the European Commission. This enables Israeli entities operating in the settlements to receive EU funds.

**Examples of companies receiving EU grants**

Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories: cosmetics manufacturer and retailer partially owned by two settlements. Company factory and visitors' centre is located in West Bank settlement. Ahava participates in four FP7 projects.

Israeli Antiques Authority: complicit in settlement expansion and displacement of Palestinians in East Jerusalem receives EU research grants.

Motorola Israel: provides equipment to the Israeli Military, has created surveillance systems for at least 20 settlements, designed and manufactured electronic fuses for aircraft bombs and guided munitions used in the assault on Gazan civilians and infrastructure in 2008/9. Motorola participates in 4 FP7 projects.

Elbit Systems: an Israeli military company supplied Hermes Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) which killed 29 civilians, including eight children, during 2008/ 9 assault on Gaza. Also involved in construction of the Wall. Elbit participates in 4 FP7 projects.

The European Union is currently discussing the future of EU research funding policy, including the rules for participation in future research projects (Horizon 2020)

**We are asking the UK government to:**

meet its obligations under international law.

1. make representations to the European Commission to ensure that the practice of funding entities involved in settlements is brought to an immediate end.
2. use its seat on the European Council to take steps to ensure that if Israel participates in Horizon 2020 the rules are drafted so that Israeli entities complicit with settlements do not receive EU funding.

**In July, more than 250 European academics signed an open letter to the EU Research Commissioner calling for the exclusion of Israeli companies and state bodies that are complicit with Israeli violations on international law from EU funded research programmes.**