



Did you know your trade union is asking you to boycott Israeli goods?

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions passed two motions on Palestine that are extremely critical of the Israeli government in its oppression of the Palestinian people. The two motions condemn Israel for its human rights abuses, its policy of ethnic cleansing and war crimes and criticise the EU for failing to end the preferential trading status granted to Israel under the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement.

ICTU is committed to "actively and vigorously" promote a policy of boycott and of divestment, to make direct representations to government and to the EU, and to mobilize EU-wide trade union solidarity action. The ICTU conference has demonstrated that all sections of the Irish working class and of Irish civil society continue to be appalled at the inhumanity of Israeli state policy. It demonstrates that the people of Ireland -- north and south -- are steadfast in their commitment to stand in solidarity alongside the long-suffering Palestinian people. All union bound workers should therefore refuse to handle Israeli goods.

What is the underlying principle of calls for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)?

Despite abundant condemnation of Israel's policies by the UN and all relevant international conventions, the international community of nations has failed to bring about Israel's compliance with international law or its respect for basic human rights. Israel's crimes have continued with utter impunity. The time has come for action, not just words. BDS is the most effective non-violent, morally consistent means for achieving justice and genuine peace in the region through concerted international pressure similar to that applied on South African apartheid.

Should I refuse to handle all Israeli goods?

Yes. Jars of Palestinian pickle, for instance, are handed over to the Israelis who stick a 'Made in Israel' label on them and export them to Europe. Flowers grown by Palestinians in Gaza, strawberries, oranges, lemons and aubergines are all sent to Israel, mixed with Israeli produce and exported to Europe with Israeli certificates of

origin." In other words, Israel pretends that products from illegal Israeli settlements originate within Israel's internationally-recognised boundaries.

How do I know what products to boycott?

If the first three numbers of the bar code are 729, the product was made by Israel, within the Green Line or in one of the Israeli-controlled industrial zones built illegally inside the West Bank. However, there are also products made by Israel which do not have a bar code or use another number. There are also product components that are made by Israel but do not carry the 729 bar code; among these are computers and clothing.

If you think a product that does not have the 729 code may have been made by Israel, within the Green Line or in its illegal settlements or industrial zones, ask the merchant who is selling the product and/or the product manufacturer.

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