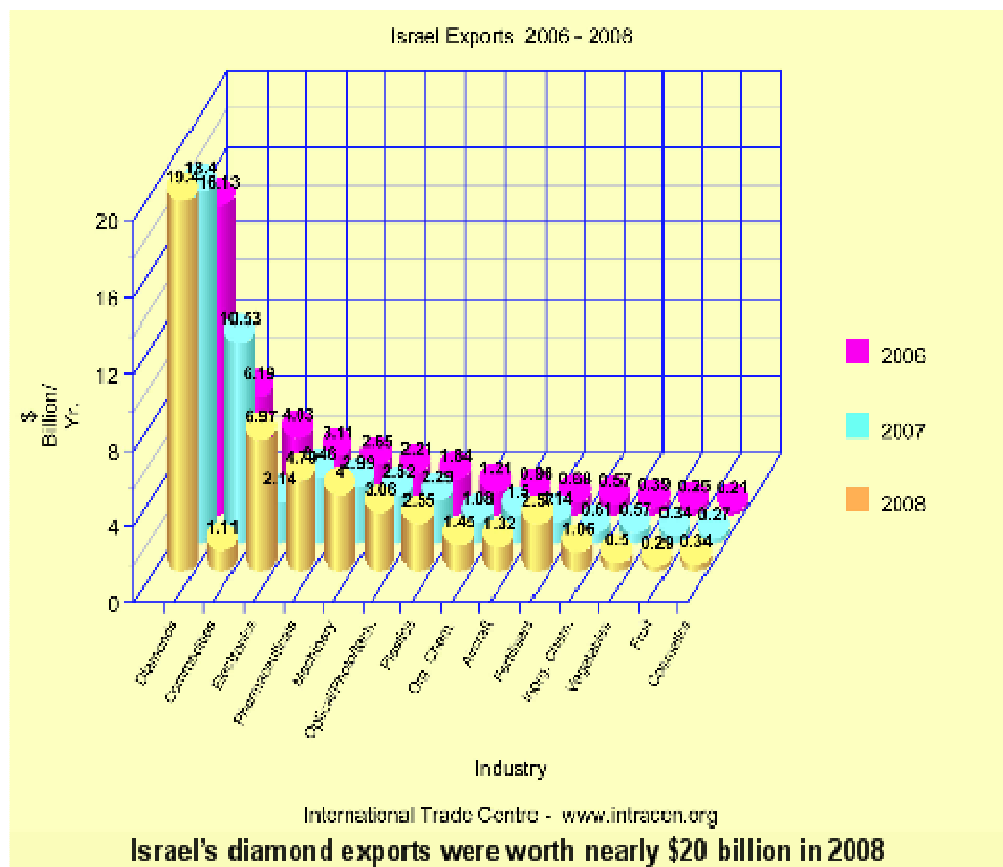


Boycott Israeli (blood) Diamonds

The main function of the boycott campaign against Israeli should be to inflict economic and psychological damage. To achieve this we need to examine in detail the structures underpinning the Israeli economy, the main revenue source that sustains Israel's military occupation and subjugation of the Palestinian people.

By studying the economic data we learn which sectors of Israel's economy are most important and which are most vulnerable to attack by means of boycott and divestment. By doing this we can hone our campaign efforts to achieve maximum impact with our limited resources. This requires discipline on our behalf as we are all eager to go out and target the Israeli goods that are most easily identifiable, such as fruit and vegetables, without giving due consideration to the efficiency of that action in terms of what it can achieve and whether a similar effort focused elsewhere can achieve a better result. We need to campaign smart if we are going to maximise our impact.

Even a cursory examination of Israel's economic data reveals an enormous anomaly in its trade statistics. One single commodity towers over all other sectors of the economy. Israeli diamond exports outperform all other manufacturing exports by a very significant margin. Israel's often lauded high-tech, pharma and agricultural exports fall far short of its diamond exports which account for over 30% of total manufacturing exports, worth \$20 billion in 2008. The net value of diamond exports was \$10 billion, which is significantly more than even the gross value of Israel's other export commodities. From a financial stand point there can be no disputing the fact that Israeli diamonds offer the most valuable boycott target.



Despite this, solidarity activists are remarkably reluctant to campaign for a boycott of Israeli diamonds. The usual refrain is that people don't buy diamonds every day and it is much better to concentrate on the items people are buying on a regular basis. This completely misses the potential global impact that can resonate from even a local diamond boycott campaign.

Unlike other Israeli exports diamonds are purchased by individual consumers, not by governments, corporations or businesses. Unlike software, medical or military products diamonds are a luxury commodity the value of which is completely dependent upon the carefully nurtured public perception of them as objects of desire, romance and purity. Public perception, like fashion, is extremely fickle. Anything that tarnishes the image of diamonds would have very serious consequences for the industry. The lure of diamonds has been enhanced by restrictive trading cartels and promoted by slick media campaigns over decades. Once a brand image is damaged it is extremely difficult to repair. If the public begin to associate diamonds with the murder of innocent civilians on an aid flotilla or with terrorised and traumatised children in Gaza then their image will be damaged and few women will want to have that on their conscience. Public opinion can be changed in a relatively short period – the industry knows this. The potential damage of a diamond boycott campaign is enormous. Diamonds are a media friendly subject and will therefore gain a lot more attention than a campaign targeting fruit, veg or cosmetics.

The Kimberly Process which is supposed to prevent the trade in blood diamonds is seriously flawed as it only prevents the trade in rough diamonds that fund human rights abuse. Israel's cut and polished diamonds are not banned regardless of what human rights abuses they fund. The Kimberly Process facilitates the contamination of the entire market with diamonds crafted in Israel – revenue from which funds war crimes, crimes against humanity and piracy. We need to highlight this by campaigning on a few different fronts:

1. Call for an urgent review of the Kimberly Process so all diamonds that fund human rights abuse are banned. Who can deny that?
2. Ask jewellers to support the call for a review of the KP and to refuse to sell diamonds crafted in Israel
3. Demand that all diamonds are hallmarked (laser inscribed to identify where they were crafted so consumers have the right to know where it was crafted and the right to choose an Israel-free diamond.
4. Ask Jewellers to explain to desist from telling consumer that all diamonds are now “conflict free” when in fact 50% of gem-quality diamonds are crafted in Israel the world's bloodiest conflict zones

The EU is a member of the Kimberly Process and can raise this issue at the next meeting scheduled for October 2010.

A diamond boycott is all about generating debate over the double-standard introduced to the diamond industry by the Kimberly Process and about raising awareness of what is the enormous, largely clandestine, trade in Israeli diamonds. If an organisation like IAWM comes out and calls specifically for a boycott of Israeli diamonds in response to the raid on the aid flotilla jewellers will be asked to comment and the gaping loophole in the Kimberly Process will be exposed. They will have to admit it is flawed and admit that they are selling diamonds crafted in Israel that should be classed as blood diamonds.

Once the issue is raised in one country it will reverberate globally and the industry will eventually have to address the fact that they are dealing in Israeli blood diamonds. The startling facts are all available at <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article11170.shtml>

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