



The Case Against SodaStream

What is SodaStream?

SodaStream is an Israeli company which manufactures 'The SodaStream Drinkmaker', a product intended to carbonate water and soda. Its administrative headquarters are in Israel.

Why is Sodastream a BDS target?

The principal manufacturing plant for the SodaStream Drinkmaker is located in an illegal Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank.

The settlement, called Ma'ale Adumim, is built on land stolen from Palestinians and is one of the largest in the West Bank. It is built on the remains of seven Palestinian villages, which were destroyed so that it could be built.

This particular land theft is considered 'the largest single expropriation in the history of the Israeli occupation.' (*Who Profits: The Israeli Occupation Industry*)

The SodaStream plant brings financial benefits to Ma'ale Adumim and helps to cement the occupation through the economic strengthening of the settlement.

Municipal tax paid by SodaStream goes to the Ma'ale Adumim Municipality, which uses these funds solely to support the growth and development of the illegal settlement.

Settlements deny the Palestinians their right to self-determination, to build their own state on their own land, and to create their own factories and jobs, and run their own economy.

All companies which locate in settlements, including SodaStream, are given tax breaks by the Israeli government. SodaStream made a decision to locate its production facilities in an area under illegal military occupation.

By doing so, it became complicit in the occupation, and therefore a target for the BDS campaign.

How is SodaStream complicit in Israel's war crimes and breaches of international law?

By locating its factory on a settlement, illegally built on occupied land, SodaStream is complicit in the following violations of international law:

■ Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights (Syria) is a violation of international law. UN Resolution 242 calls for Israel's withdrawal from these territories.

■ Israel's settlement building policy, as well as the actual building of the settlements, is a breach of international law. UN Resolution 446 states: 'The policy and practices of Israel in establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.'

■ Israel's settlements in the West Bank are built on land taken from the Palestinians. The theft of this land contravenes the Hague Convention which states: 'Private property cannot be confiscated'.

■ The destruction of Palestinian towns and villages, and the building of settlements on that land, has changed the physical geography of the West Bank. The influx of Israelis and immigrants from other countries to live in the settlements has altered the population of the West Bank. UN Resolution 465 states: 'All measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, the demographics, the status and institutional structure of the West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem and the Golan Heights have no legal validity.'

■ Palestinian homes and property, including thousands of acres of farmland, are destroyed to clear the way for settlement building. One of the definitions of a war crime, according to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, is the 'extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly' (Article 8).

■ The arrival of Israelis to live in the settlements is a violation of Article 49 of the 4th Geneva Conventions, which state: 'The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.'

Israel's apartheid wall separates the Palestinian land on which Ma'ale Adumim is built from other Palestinian land in the West Bank. In 2004, the International Court of Justice issued an advisory opinion that the route of the wall, which cuts deep into Palestinian land, is illegal, and that it must be immediately dismantled.

Even the British government has repeatedly stressed that settlements are illegal, and, in December 2013, issued a warning to businesses about the legal risks and reputational damage of doing business with settlements.

'The occupation imprisons thousands of the Palestinians' young men, gives their land and water to settlers, demolishes their houses and partitions the remaining territory with scores of checkpoints and segregated roads. There are almost no basic foundations for an economy. The way to create Palestinian jobs is to end the occupation and let Palestinians build those foundations – not to build "bridges to peace" on other people's land without their permission.'

Financial Times Editorial – Saturday 1 Feb 2014

The exploitation of Palestinian workers in settlements

Israel's occupation of the West Bank has destroyed the Palestinian economy. In October 2013, the World Bank estimated that the current loss to the Palestinian economy as a result of the occupation was \$3.4 billion.

As a result, jobs in the West Bank are scarce. Palestinians who had farmed for generations have had their farmland and grazing land stolen for settlement building, and also find themselves without work.

The result is that Israel's occupation has forced Palestinians to look for jobs in the settlements which are eating up their land.

Forced to work for the occupier, they are seen as a source of cheap labour and exploited. Kav LaOved, the Israeli workers' rights organisation, documents that Palestinian workers are underpaid, are not given holiday pay or sick pay, are forbidden from organising into unions or joining Israeli unions, must fend for themselves if injured at work, and have to obtain security permits to work in the settlements.

Under Israel's apartheid, Palestinians are not allowed to live in settlements, and often leave home before dawn in order to travel for hours through checkpoints to their settlement-based workplace, arriving home late at night.

In 2011, a survey revealed that 82% of Palestinians would leave their job in the settlements if a suitable alternative was available.

SodaStream and Palestinians

SodaStream employs around 500 Palestinians in its Ma'ale Adumim factory.

In an interview in 2013, a Palestinian worker at the factory, said: 'We Palestinian workers in this factory always feel like we are enslaved.' He described the working week at the factory as 'from work to bed' and added, 'there is no extra pay for overtime or night shifts'. This is a violation of Israel's Hours of Work and Rest law.

SodaStream's Palestinian workers face the same job insecurities as those in other settlement employment.

The SodaStream worker said: 'They treat us like slaves. This has happened many times on the assembly line: when a worker is sick and wants to take sick leave, the supervisor will fire him on the second day. They will not even give him warning or send him to human resources, they will immediately fire him.'

Kav LaOved has fought to improve pay and working conditions for Palestinians working at the SodaStream plant, but noted in 2010 that they remain 'at the bottom of the hierarchy in the factory and constantly fear their dismissal.'

What can you do?

Palestine Solidarity Campaign is asking supporters of Palestinian rights to target stores and chains which stock the SodaStream Drinksmaker, and ask them to take the product off their shelves.

This will hit SodaStream where it hurts – in the pocket.

Stores which trade with SodaStream and give the company outlets to sell its products are playing their own part in aiding the financial stability of the settlements and helping the occupation to continue.

Below are the names of companies which stock SodaStream products. Please write to the head office of each company and ask it to remove SodaStream from its shelves, outlining the reasons why.

Asda Head Office: Southbank, Great Wilson St, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS11 5AD

Argos Head Office: 489–499 Avebury Boulevard, Saxon Gate West, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 2NW

Currys Head Office: Currys, PO Box 1687, Sheffield, S2 5YA

Lakeland Head Office: Alexandra Buildings, Windermere, Cumbria, LA23 1BQ

Harvey Nichols Head Office: 361–365 Chiswick High Road London W4 4HS

House of Fraser Head Office: 318 Oxford Street, London W1C 1HF

Robert Dyas Head Office: Cleeve Court, Cleeve Road, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 7SD

Sainsbury's Head Office: 33 Holborn, London EC1N 2HT

We've already had major successes with SodaStream stockists. One July 1st 2014, John Lewis announced it would no longer be selling SodaStream Drinksmakers. This followed PSC protests outside the John Lewis store in Oxford Street every fortnight, and a letter writing campaign. On June 30th 2014, SodaStream closed its flagship UK store in Brighton following weekly protests by Brighton and Hove PSC. Read more here: <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/amina-saleem/palestine-activists-celebrate-sodastream-shuts-uk-store>

Get involved – let companies know they shouldn't be doing business with occupation profiteer, SodaStream.

And don't buy SodaStream!

Palestine Solidarity Campaign

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