

Press Release  
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## **New international joint campaign to stop foreign complicity in Israel's illegal settlement project: *Stop Trade with Settlements***

***Campaign focuses on companies that trade, or have until recently traded, with Israeli settlements JCB (UK), Barclays Bank (UK), Siemens (Germany), Carrefour (France), Maersk (Denmark), Tui (Germany), eDreams Odigeo and Opodo (Spain)***

An alliance of more than 80 civil society organizations today launches a new campaign “*Stop Trade with Settlements*,” demanding countries to ban all trade with illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), including by major multinational companies and financial institutions sustaining the settlement enterprise.

The [‘Trading with Illegal settlements’](#) report highlights how foreign states and corporations, through ongoing trade with illegal settlements, directly enable the humanitarian crisis driven by Israel’s prolonged occupation.

It targets settlement trade specifically because of Israel’s ongoing and escalating oppression of Palestinians in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), fragmentation of its economy, and undermining of the viability of a future Palestinian state. Ending trade with settlements is a necessary step to uphold human rights, protect Palestinian livelihoods, stop Israel’s settlement expansion, and end the unlawful occupation.

Over the last four years, Israel has significantly accelerated its settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, marking a staggering increase in both settlement construction and land appropriation. In 2023, the Israeli government approved the construction of 30,682 housing units in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem— representing a 180% increase in just five years. In June 2024, the Israeli government designated 12.7 square kilometres of land in the Jordan Valley as “state land”. In May 2025, the Israeli cabinet decided to establish 22 new settlements in the occupied West Bank. These approvals surpassed previous records and marked the highest level of settlement expansion since the Oslo Accords (1993-1995). Most of these approvals were granted for settlements located “deep into the West Bank”, further fragmenting Palestinian territory and imposing new movement restrictions on Palestinians. The revival of the ‘E1’ plan - frozen since 2012 amid widespread international opposition - approving construction of 3,400 new housing units in a bloc connecting East Jerusalem and the Ma’ale Adumim settlement, is effectively cutting off Palestinian movement between the northern and southern West Bank.

The advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in July 2024 makes it clear: governments allowing trade with the settlement economy are complicit in the maintenance and expansion of illegal Israeli settlements and thus in sustaining Israel’s illegal occupation of Palestinian territory.

Campaigners say that trade with settlements only serves to legitimize them, despite them being illegal under international law and a barrier to peace. Israel’s control costs the Palestinian economy billions of dollars a year while poverty in the West Bank has risen from 12 to 28% in the past two years, with a recorded unemployment rate of 35% (doubled since October 2023).

Israel attracts business investment into its settlements across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, via incentives such as cheap land leases, subsidies for technology and wages, tax breaks, and cash grants. Among the international companies and financial institutions that continue to trade or have until recently

traded with Israeli settlements, including provision of services or investments, helping to sustain and legitimize them are:

- German company **TUI**, another travel conglomerate, continues to list several tours to illegal Israeli settlements. TUI continues to offer a "Dual Narrative tour", taking visitors to meet with settlers in the West Bank city of Hebron in a "bullet-proof settler bus".
- Equipment manufactured by **JC Bamford Excavators (JCB)**, a UK-based construction company, is used by Israel to demolish Palestinian structures, homes and crops – and to build illegal settlements. Construction companies like JCB profit from the forcible transfer of Palestinians and settlement expansion.
- The German multinational giant **Siemens** provides equipment and services for settlement-linked transportation infrastructure including a rail deal worth over €1 billion.
- French retailer **Carrefour** has an agreement with Yenot Bitan to produce and sell Carrefour products in Israel. There are at least nine Yenot Bitan stores located in the oPt, including two with full Carrefour branding.
- Among the foreign banks that continue to finance settlement trade through loans and financial support, British multinational **Barclays** supplied \$18.1 billion in loans and services to settlement-linked companies between January 2021 and August 2024, making it the third largest creditor of corporations complicit in settlement trade, following BNP Paribas and HSBC.
- Danish shipping firm **Maersk** has transported goods for four companies listed in the UN Database of corporations complicit in the settlement economy: Comasco, Extal, Ofertex Industries, and Twitoplast.
- Spanish company **eDreams Odigeo**, one of the biggest travel companies in the world, and its subsidiary **Opodo**, have been documented as offering hotels and accommodation in Israeli settlements across the West Bank.

Around 6,500 Palestinian women are now employed in settlements because Israel's policies have devastated local employment, leaving them with little choice. Around 65% earn less than \$20 a day and most do not have written contracts or health insurance, and often work in unhealthy and unsafe conditions, over long hours.

The average wage of Palestinian women working in the settlements is significantly lower than the Israeli minimum wage but higher than available local jobs, which illustrates how the economic hardships imposed by settlements forces local people into exploitative labor.

The EU remains Israel's largest trade partner accounting for roughly 32% of its overall trade in goods, with a total trade volume amounting to €42 billion per year. The UK is one of Israel's largest European trade partners worth just under £6 billion a year.

Campaigners insist that countries particularly in the EU and UK explicitly ban trade with Israeli settlements, including the provision of services and investments. Israeli exporters must determine the origins of goods and be held accountable for false claims. Banks and financial institutions should be barred from providing loans and credit to settlement-based corporations that fund settlement projects.

#### NOTES TO EDITOR:

- Campaigners contacted the highlighted companies ahead of report launch. Since sending the companies their specific mentions in the report, E-dreams and Maersk have announced changes to their policy in relation to their business activity in illegal Israeli settlements. Opodo has withdrawn their offerings by the time of publication. These have been reflected in the report.
- Organizations that endorse the "Stop Trade with Settlements" campaign (#stopsettlements) are listed in the preface of the report. Link to the report called "Trading with Illegal Settlements: How Foreign States and Corporations Enable Israel's Illegal Settlement Enterprise" is [here](#).
- The July 2024 ICJ [Advisory Opinion](#) on the *Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem* ruled that states are obligated under international law to "abstain from entering into economic or trade dealings with Israel concerning the Occupied Palestinian Territory or parts thereof which may entrench its unlawful presence in the

territory”, and must “take steps to prevent trade or investment relations that assist in the maintenance of the illegal situation created by Israel in the [Occupied Territory].

- Settlement trade includes any commercial relationship—direct or indirect—with Israeli settlements in occupied territory. This encompasses subsidiaries, services, financing and supply chains. Corporate actors engaged in or enabling these activities risk being complicit in violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Trade may also be settlement-linked where it is trade with a company that is itself based in a settlement or which is closely implicated in business with settlements. More than 700,000 Israelis are living in hundreds of settlements in occupied Palestinian territory, the majority in Area C of the West Bank. Israeli settlements control over 42% of the West Bank’s total land and are linked by roads, rail, industrial parks and other infrastructure, along with nearly 900 military checkpoints.
- Unemployment rate in the West Bank. See [Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute-MAS](#) (February 2025).
- Poverty increase rate 2023-2024. See [ILO](#) (October 2024).

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