

February 25, 2015

United Kingdom Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Report

- A wide network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) companies in the UK are active in promoting BDS (boycott, divestments, and sanctions) campaigns against Israel. These groups include Corporate Watch, Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights, Stop G4S, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Boycott Israel Network, and ECCR (Ecumenical Council on Corporate Responsibility). Activities include the development of a BDS Handbook and related “research” publications, demonstrations, a campaign against G4S that included complaints to the UK’s OECD National Contact Point, and removal of Israeli produce from UK supermarkets.
- In order to advance the BDS agenda, these groups distort legal narratives to falsely accuse Israel of human rights violations and erroneously argue that conducting business with Israel or Israeli businesses outside the 1949 Armistice line amounts to furthering these alleged violations.

Corporate Watch’s BDS Handbook

- Corporate Watch describes itself as “an [independent research group](#)” that confronts “the root causes of [corporate power](#)” by providing research as “a vital resource for campaigns looking to target particular companies.” Founded in 1996, Corporate Watch “is registered as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, which gives us the freedom to express our political opinions. Our work includes investigative journalism, analysis and publishing.” Corporate Watch does not disclose the names of its employees.
- In 2009, Corporate Watch began a “[Corporate Occupation](#)” campaign that “[aims to track corporate](#) complicity in Israeli militarism, occupation and apartheid.” Corporate Occupation is “intended to serve as a resource for the international movement for [Boycott Divestment and Sanctions against Israeli apartheid](#), colonisation and occupation.” The campaign relied heavily on information from the Israeli NGO [Who Profits](#), another group that exploits CSR principles to advance BDS against Israel.
- In September 2011, Corporate Watch published “[Targeting Israeli Apartheid: a Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Handbook](#).” The handbook demonizes Israel with accusations of colonization, racism, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, Judaization, massacres, and “collective punishment, targeted assassinations, house demolitions, torture and repression.” It targets Israeli industries by listing extensive company profiles, along with alleged violations and BDS recommendations.
- Almost all contributors to the handbook are affiliated with the [International Solidarity Movement \(ISM\)](#). Listed authors are Tom Anderson, Therezia Cooper, Jack Curry, Georgia Clough, and Pete Jones with additional research by Karen Hallel. Anderson and Cooper are both [pseudonyms for activists](#) who spent time “in Palestine with the Jordan Valley Solidarity project, the Tel Rumeida Project and the International Solidarity Movement (ISM)”; Jones and Hallel “both volunteered with the ISM in Palestine and have been active in the UK BDS movement”; and Jack Curry previously contributed [an article](#) on the ISM website.
- Ewa Jasiewicz, Coordinator of the Free Gaza movement, wrote the handbook’s foreword. As an ISM activist, Jasiewicz justified a 2003 shooting attack against Israeli civilians and advocated political assassinations:

“Lawd - S-T-R-A-T-E-G-Y, I understand its about attacking civilian life the way civilian life has been crushed and continually denied under the occupation and showing Israelis that they are not safe... from the indefatigable Palestinian resistance etc But that mesage (sic) has been got loud and clear. I don't get why activists can't go and do the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) or something, or do a sophisticated politician bump-off...”

- The following are some of the most egregious quotes from the handbook:
 - Purpose of BDS: “BDS is thus not just about the wall, or the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. It is a holistic approach to Israel's militarism and its racist and apartheid policies against Palestinians, both inside 1948 Israel and in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967: from the ethnic cleansing of 1947-9 to the state-orchestrated marginalisation of majority Palestinian municipalities, such as Nazareth; from the current state-orchestrated Judaization of Jerusalem to the harassment and house demolitions intended to push communities out of areas coveted by the state for Jews, both in the villages of the West Bank and the unrecognised Palestinian villages within Israel. BDS presents countless possibilities for effective grassroots campaigning, ranging from consumer action to workplace organising and direct action. The BDS movement has the potential to bring the Palestinian struggle to the doorsteps of those who profit from Israeli apartheid.”
 - Security barrier: “At the same time, Israel embarked upon a new project, profitable for Israeli corporations but extremely costly to Palestinian communities: the 700km long apartheid wall. The wall is intended to steal more Palestinian land, ghettoize Palestinians and annex many Israeli settlements to the Western side of the wall.”¹
 - Travel to Israel: “Interrogation by surly airport security, sharing buses with hordes of armed-to-the-teeth Israeli adolescents and the chance to see the old city of Jerusalem policed by racist goons with a quota of Palestinian residents to harass. For the more adventurous tourist, there are the deserted and terrorised streets of the old city of Al Khalil [the Arabic name for Hebron], daubed with xenophobic graffiti, the apartheid wall, collective punishment, targeted assassinations, house demolitions, torture and repression. The possibilities are endless.”

Divestment Campaign against G4S

Background

- G4S was formed in a 2004 merger between two security firms – one British and one Danish. Before the merger, the Danish firm's Israeli subsidiary discontinued its contracts that “protected the [perimeter of the settlements.](#)” However, in 2010, [G4S continued to provide](#) minimal services in settlements and also provided security equipment to Israeli prisons. In 2014, G4S chief executive Ashley Almanza clarified “[We do not operate prisons, we supply prisons with security equipment.](#)” G4S stated it will not renew prison contracts that will expire in 2017.
- G4S has had several scandals unrelated to Israel. In 2014, G4S security guards were charged with [manslaughter](#) for the 2010 death of man at Heathrow airport who was killed

¹ In June 2002, Israel announced its decision to erect a security barrier that would prevent Palestinian terrorists from entering Israel. The decision was made in the wake of a virulent campaign of suicide bombings in restaurants, cafes, buses, and shopping malls that [killed hundreds of Israelis](#), including scores of children, and wounding thousands. Data shows that since the construction of the security barrier, the number of terror attacks has dropped significantly, saving countless lives.

while being restrained. G4S was also “banned from [UK] Government contracts after being accused of [overcharging for tagging offenders](#), some of whom were found to be back in prison, overseas or dead.”

- In 2010, Merav Amir and Dalit Baum of [Who Profits](#), then a project of the [Coalition of Women for Peace \(CWP\)](#), gave “[testimony](#)” against G4S at the [Russell Tribunal on Palestine \(RToP\)](#). In March 2011, CWP and Who Profits published [The Case of G4S Private Security Companies and the Israeli Occupation](#).
 - Founded in 2009, RToP is a kangaroo court that uses a legal façade to create an image of neutrality and credibility, and to accuse Israel of apartheid, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.
- Beginning in 2010, Corporate Watch and other campaigners urged Co-operative Bank (affiliated with the Co-Operative Group described below) to divest from G4S. In July 2012, the Bank confirmed it had divested, claiming to have “[lost faith in the management](#)” of G4S after a failed purchase of a rival firm cost the company millions. Corporate Watch also urged UK pension funds to divest from G4S, but was unsuccessful.

“Stop G4S” Campaign

- In September 2012, Corporate Watch [published a company profile of G4S](#). The “Stop G4S” campaign was launched a month later, serving as the main UK-based BDS drive against the company.
- Stop G4S is a “[UK-based network of various grassroots activist groups](#), campaigns, NGOs and trade unionists that have a shared interest in holding G4S to account for its track record of human rights abuses across the world and in stopping the company from taking over public services or being given any more control over our lives.”
- Stop G4S does not list the organizations involved in the network, however it was [founded at a October 2012 conference attended](#) by Boycott Israel Network, Corporate Watch, and a variety of Palestinian solidarity and migrant rights groups. Stop G4S targets the company for activities worldwide, drawing heavily on events in Israel.
- The campaign organizes protests, publicizes upcoming contracts between G4S and various government entities, and encourages divestment from the company.
- In October 2014, [Stop G4S](#) derided the idea of Hamas using human shields in the 2014 Gaza conflict, and compared Hamas to the Warsaw ghetto fighters:
 - “Israel and its supporters make a song and a dance about Hamas using ‘human shields’. No one accepts their definition of ‘human shields’ which is firing from areas in which civilians live. This happens always in asymmetric warfare and Israel needs to be reminded of the Warsaw ghetto battle where the fighters fired from houses in which people lived.”
- In a briefing to encourage trade unions to divest from G4S, [Stop G4S argued that](#) security prisoners are “political prisoners”:
 - “Israel calls all Palestinian political prisoners ‘security’ prisoners. The wide-ranging crimes that merit this label include entering the 1948 territories (present-day Israel) without proper permission, throwing Molotov cocktails (including ones that do not explode), entering the al-Aqsa compound with a knife, belonging to a group that Israel considers a ‘hostile organization,’ membership in a political cell that is responsible for the death of an Israeli soldier, and so on.”
- In 2012, Shiar Youssef from Corporate Watch and activist Chris Osmond were arrested [for aggravated trespassing](#) on G4S’s property. The two climbed onto the roof of G4S and hung “Stop G4S” banners. They [were acquitted](#) in 2013.

- Stop G4S organized a protest at the company's 2014 annual general meeting, in which "25 protesters who had bought shares in the company in order to attend" disrupted the meeting. Half of the [questions](#) (13 of 26) asked by shareholders at the meeting related to Israel/Palestine.

Complaint Against G4S at the UK National Contact Point (NCP)

- In November 2013, Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR), via the Leigh Day law firm, filed a complaint against G4S at the [UK National Contact Point \(NCP\) of the OECD](#).² The complaint detailed "serious [human rights concerns](#) in relation to military checkpoints associated with the Separation Barrier in the West Bank, the Erez crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip and within Israeli prison facilities."
- In May 2014, the NCP agreed to further [examine some of the concerns](#). According to the NCP summary, LPHR's complaint lacked "details of the actions of the company," and the complainants sought to acquire this information via the NCP process. G4S claimed LPHR's complaint was [politically motivated](#) and that "it is not appropriate to use the NCP process to address these issues."
- According to the NCP, LPHR's complaint included "a wide range of NGO reports on impacts, and around 30 accounts of individuals relating specifically to their treatment at the locations and facilities identified." LPHR [repeated allegations](#) from NGOs such as [Al-Haq](#), [Al Mezan](#), [Who Profits](#), [Defence for Children International Palestine](#), [Addameer](#), and Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling. These NGOs lack the credibility suggested by the NCP, frequently demonizing Israel with false allegations of "war crimes" and "human rights violations," and repeating unverified and unverifiable eyewitness testimony as the basis of their claims.
- Michael Mansfield, a trustee of LPHR, is very active in the [Russell Tribunal on Palestine](#) (see above). Mansfield is also on 2014 legal team of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, assisting in a [legal campaign](#) against the Egyptian military at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Ecumenical Council on Corporate Responsibility (ECCR)

- Ecumenical Council on Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) is a UK-based inter-denominational Christian organization that [promotes BDS](#). ECCR members include [Christian Aid](#), [Pax Christi](#), [Trócaire](#), and Quakers & Business Group.
- ECCR manages the UK activities of the [Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel](#) (EAPPI), a project [founded by](#) the [World Council of Churches \(WCC\)](#). EAPPI consistently [demonizes](#) Israel; makes accusations of "apartheid," "war crimes," and "Bantustans"; and calls Israel's security barrier, which has [saved countless lives from suicide bombings](#), "[evil](#)."
 - EAPPI [promotes](#) the Kairos Palestine document that calls for BDS, denies the Jewish historical connection to Israel in theological terms, and blames Israel for regional conflict. The document is used to rally churches globally to support BDS, delegitimization, and demonization of Israel.

² The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an economic organization comprised of 34 countries (mainly in Western Europe and North America, plus Chile, Israel, Turkey, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand). The National Contact Point (NCP) in each country promotes the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The NCP decides on issues pertaining to the guidelines, including complaints lodged against companies.

- ECCR claims to have “[played an active role](#)” in removing Israeli settlement produce from UK supermarket shelves, stating: “We carried out detailed research on supermarket sourcing policies to help raise general awareness of and inform investor engagement on the issue.” In doing so ECCR worked with Christian Aid, The Methodist Church in Britain, and Quaker Peace & Social Witness.
 - Christian Aid, The Methodist Church in Britain, and Quaker Peace & Social Witness helped produce the 2012 publication “[Trading Away Peace](#).” The document supports the [BDS agenda](#), calling on EU and individual European governments to wage political warfare on Israel through various forms of economic sanctions.
- In 2010, ECCR’s [Christmas campaign](#) advocated against purchasing Israeli dates. In 2011, ECCR [published a list of Israeli products](#) for boycott due to alleged connections with “settlement economy.” ECCR stated that “British and Irish retailers could be [undermining efforts for peace](#) in Israel and Palestine by selling goods produced in Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.”
 - ECCR’s information on Israeli products came from [Quaker Peace & Social Witness, a project of Quakers in Britain](#).
 - ECCR campaigns on several [other international issues](#), but only calls for [boycotts against Israel](#).

Settlement Produce Labeling

- In December 2009, the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) “introduced [voluntary guidelines to enable produce](#) from Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories to be specifically labelled as such.”
- According to DEFRA, the guidelines followed “requests from [retailers, consumer groups, and NGOs](#) for greater clarity about which origin should be stated on food and drink goods that have been produced and packed in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT).” [Reportedly](#), these NGOs included [Oxfam](#) and [War on Want](#).
- DEFRA stated “traders would be misleading consumers, and would therefore almost be certainly committing an offence, if they were to declare produce from the OPT (including from the West Bank) as ‘Produce of Israel’. This would apply irrespective of whether the produce was from a Palestinian producer or from an Israeli settlement in the OPT.”

Co-operative Group UK Produce Boycott

Background

- In 2009, the Co-operative Group UK (Co-op), “the UK’s [largest co-operative business](#) with interests across food, funerals, insurance and legal services” published a [Human Rights and Trade Policy](#), outlining “the extreme conditions under which we will [suspend trade](#) with a nation state, designated region or in the case of conflict, a particular product... One such condition is where there is a broad international consensus that the status of a designated region is illegal. There are only two examples of such settlements: The Israeli settlements in the Palestinian occupied Territories and the Moroccan settlements in Western Sahara.”
- Until 2012, Co-op had a policy of not sourcing “any [produce or own-brand product](#) from the Israeli settlements.” On April 25, 2012, Co-op’s “Board determined that, going forward, we will additionally [no longer engage with any supplier](#) of produce known to be sourcing

from the Israeli settlements.” [The decision affected](#) suppliers such as Agrexco, Arava Export Growers, Adafresh, and Mehadrin.

- Courts in France, Canada, and the UK have explicitly found no international law that prohibits business relations over the 1949 armistice lines. In addition, both a French court and the Netherlands advertising board found that claiming a company that sells goods or operates over armistice lines is acting “illegally” or in violation of international law is defamatory.

BDS Groups Pressure Co-op:

- Analysis of activities leading up to the April 2012 decision and other proposed Co-op initiatives (see table below) suggests that UK BDS activists and groups were primarily responsible for driving the boycott agenda within the Co-operative.
- Two pro-Palestinian lobby groups were centrally involved in the Co-op campaign, Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Boycott Israel Network.
- Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) is a UK-based group that “has joined a [worldwide campaign against Israeli agricultural export corporations](#) in light of their deep complicity in Israel’s ongoing violations of international law and Palestinian human rights.” PSC and affiliated groups [called](#) on individuals to join the Co-operative Group:
 - “If not already a member, please join the Co-op now; either fill in an in store leaflet or online. Start spreading the news to friends and especially other Co-op members, elected representatives and staff. Co-op half yearly meetings take place in the 7 regions in the autumn; keep checking their website for the dates and try to attend, encouraging others across the country too.”
- PSC has strong [ties](#) with UK MPs who have initiated motions relating to Co-op’s boycott in parliament:
 - In May 2012, PSC “patron” MP Sir Jeremy Corbyn [sponsored](#) a motion in Parliament on the matter: **“That this House congratulates the Co-operative Group for its decision to ban all Israeli goods from the occupied Palestinian West Bank and for also boycotting all goods from Israeli companies including Arava Export Growers, Agrexco, Adafresh, and Mehadrin; calls on all other supermarket chains and suppliers to follow the excellent lead of the Co-operative Group...”**
- Boycott Israel Network (BIN) is a UK-based group that campaigns for “a [comprehensive boycott of Israel](#), in response to the 2005 call from Palestinian civil society, until Israel complies with International law and the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people.”
- Similarly to PSC, BIN has asked individuals to become Co-op members and advocate for BDS objectives in Co-op meetings. This campaign was highlighted in BIN’s [press statement](#): “For months co-op members have been highlighting their concerns about trade with complicit companies through co-ordinated letter-writing and discussions with local offices.” Co-op member Hillary Smith is also responsible for BIN’s “Agricultural trade campaign.”
- [Blogger](#) Suzanne Ismail, an anti-Israel campaign [advocate](#), used her platform on the Quaker-affiliated website “Quakernomics,” to [lobby in favor of Israel boycotts at Co-ops](#).

Examples of Co-op Meeting motions related to Israel and BDS:

Year	Motion	Votes
2011	Comprehensive boycott of all Israeli goods	The motion was debated and overwhelmingly

		rejected.
2014	Desist from trade with all Israeli companies	The motion was defeated by 107 votes to 72 with 8 abstentions.