

Tadamon Collective statement

Last fall, the Conservative government announced plans to expand the Canada-Israel [Free](#) Trade Agreement (CIFTA), a set of policies that serves to further legitimize Israeli occupation and apartheid, and deepen Canadian corporate and state involvement in Israeli racism and colonialism.

CIFTA, which took effect in January 1997, covers geographical areas over which Israel maintains military control (the West Bank and Gaza), and does not respect internationally-recognized borders. As such, it effectively legitimizes Israeli territorial control over all of Palestine. Furthermore, a portion of the trade covered in CIFTA (particularly in the agricultural sector) is the result of illegal settlement activity and production in industrial zones in the West Bank settlements. A failure to distinguish between Palestinian goods produced in the occupied territories reinforces the colonial logic that such production is Israeli economic activity, and arguably provides support for the expansion of its colonies.

In Canada, both state and corporate support for Israel has increased dramatically. Since January 1997, CIFTA has eliminated tariffs on all industrial products manufactured in Canada and Israel as well as reducing or eliminating duties on various agricultural and fisheries products. During this period, trade between Canada and Israel doubled from \$507 million in 1996 to \$1.4 billion in 2010, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. [1](#)



Israeli soldiers stand by, after Palestinians breakthrough the apartheid wall in East Jerusalem

Israel's status as an apartheid state -defined under the 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid as "establishing and maintaining

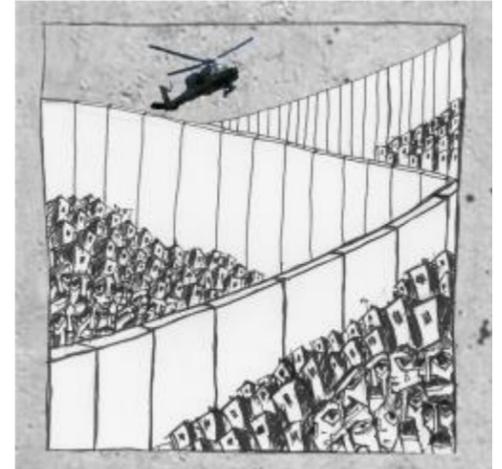
domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them" -has been affirmed across countless legal and political spheres. [2](#)

In March 2010, in response to this trade agreement, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled that settlement products shouldn't receive preferential customs duties exemptions under the EUJIAA. [6 7](#)

Although Israel initially refused to cooperate in identifying whether goods came from settlements, it conceded by identifying products' origin by use of a postal code (recognizing that the EU does not have the capacity to check if all the goods are allocated the correct customs status). Similarly, CIFTA lacks any mechanisms to prevent Canada from providing similar preferential trade treatment to settlement products.

Furthermore, the European Union bends its own rules and laws to accommodate Israel's ongoing violation of international law. In fact, Article 2 of the EUJIAA states that the relationship between Israel and the EU is based on a mutual respect of international law and human rights. However, Israel's violation of international human rights and utter disdain for the international community continues. On July 9, 2004, The International Court of Justice ruled that the Apartheid Wall is illegal under international law. [8 9](#)

If the relationship between Israel and the EU (within the context of the EUJIAA) is based on a mutual respect of international law and human rights, and Israel continues to be an egregious violator of both, why has the agreement not been suspended?



The proposed expansion of the Canada Israel Free Trade Agreement will broaden the scope of the agreement to cover new areas, particularly in the realm of science and technology. In an October 10, 2010 Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) press release, former International Trade Minister Peter Van Loan explained: "there are a great many opportunities for cooperation between Israel and Canada when it comes to the commercialization of science...Canada and Israel can be even more effective partners in the areas of technology collaboration, research and development, and innovation commercialization." [10](#)



This statement points to the means by which the expansion of this FTA reaffirms Canadian state and corporate complicity in Israeli research and development that supports the illegal military occupation. Through state-subsidized research and development funding and lower tariffs, CIFTA allows Canadian and Israeli companies to profit heavily. MTI Engineering Ltd., an Israeli company, for instance, received subsidies for naval surveillance research, and was awarded major contracts for the Israeli Ministry of Defense [11](#). Such technology is used to deny basic freedom of movement for Palestinians through technologies that are used for surveillance of Palestinians to enforce the illegal blockade of the Gaza strip, and to surveil Palestinians along the apartheid wall, in the West Bank.

The expansion of CIFTA must also be viewed within the context of the Conservative government's growing support for Israeli apartheid. After their election victory in 2006, Harper and the Conservatives have been one of Israel's strongest international allies. In 2006, the Conservatives strongly backed the Israeli attack on Lebanon, and moved quickly to support the 2008/2009 war on Gaza as well as the ongoing military siege on the Gazan people. Not only has the Canadian government supported Israeli war crimes, but it has gone so far as to publicly celebrate them.

Yet even as the Conservative majority government continues to vigorously support Israeli apartheid politically and economically,

community groups, trade union, and solidarity activists in Canada have responded to the 2005 call made by over 170 Palestinian civil society organizations for a comprehensive campaign to isolate Israeli Apartheid through Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS).

In recent years, support for the BDS movement has grown decisively across Canada. Many trade unions including the CSN-CCMM in Quebec, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), The New Brunswick Federation of Labour, and the Prince Edward Island Federation of Labour are now actively supporting the movement. Active campaigns for divestment from companies involved in the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip are growing at Carleton University and University of Toronto. This grassroots campaign for Palestinian freedom has also been publicly backed by over 500 artists in Montreal [12](#), and over 400 hundred university and college faculty members across Canada. [13](#)

Dismantling the Canada Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) is a key step for all who support the Palestinian liberation struggle, as the bilateral trade agreement codifies Canadian complicity and support for Israeli apartheid.

Please join us in demanding an end to all economic and political support for Israeli Apartheid and those Canadian and Israeli corporations who profit off of the continued systemic colonialism, racism and apartheid regime imposed upon Palestinians.

To support our call for an end to the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement and its further expansion, you can:

1. Urge your organization to send a letter or statement to the Department of Foreign and International Affairs opposing CIFTA and its planned expansion, or write one yourself:

Trade Negotiations Consultations (Israel)
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
Trade Policy and Negotiations Division I (TPE)
Lester B. Pearson Building
125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2
Fax: 613-944-3214
Email: [consultations\(at\)international.gc.ca](mailto:consultations(at)international.gc.ca)

2. Sign on to this Tadamon! statement by emailing: [info\(at\)tadamon.ca](mailto:info(at)tadamon.ca)

3. Contact your local Member of Parliament and demand the Canadian Israeli Free Trade Agreement be suspended. You can find your local Member of Parliament by [searching here](#)

4. Urge your organization, union, student union, or community group to join the growing campaign for Boycott Divestment and Sanctions called for by 170 Palestinian organizations or get involved in existing campaigns for BDS in your local city or town.



Statement endorsed by

Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)
Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid – Toronto
Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid – Winnipeg
Boycott Israeli Apartheid Campaign – Vancouver
Independent Jewish Voices – Canada
Regina Solidarity Group
Coalition for Justice in Palestine – UQAM
Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR) – Concordia
Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR) – University of British Columbia
Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) – York University
Teachers For Palestine, Canada
Palestinian and Jewish Unity (PAJU) – Montreal
Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA)

For more information about the campaign

Boycott Divestment and Sanctions -Boycott National Committee in Palestine
www.bdsmovement.net

Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign
www.stophewall.org

Palestinian Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)
www.pacbi.org



TO FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENDORSE THIS STATEMENT

[info\(at\)tadamon.ca](mailto:info(at)tadamon.ca) |

514 664 1036