

OCCUPATION PROFITEERING: The SodaStream Model for Success

Jan 21, 2014

THE INSTITUTE FOR MIDDLE EAST UNDERSTANDING

SodaStream International Ltd. is an Israeli company that produces carbonization devices and syrup for making soft drinks at home. In recent years, it has become the target of human rights activists because its main production facility is located in an industrial park, Mishor Edomim, in the Israeli settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim on Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank.

According to international law, as an occupying power Israel is forbidden from altering the occupied territories in any way, including through the construction of settlements and industrial parks, except for reasons having to do with military necessity or to benefit the occupied population specifically.

Although SodaStream officials and their defenders often claim that the company benefits Palestinians economically, SodaStream pays taxes to Israel, not to the Palestinian Authority. SodaStream and other companies located in settlements also directly support Israel's illegal settlement enterprise by paying taxes to local municipal settler governments, which are used exclusively for the growth and development of those settlements. Ma'aleh Adumim, where SodaStream's main factory is located, is of particular strategic importance to Israel's plans for the occupied territories, forming part of a ring of Jewish settlements around occupied East Jerusalem that sever it from the surrounding West Bank, and jutting deeply into the latter, effectively cutting it into two parts more easily controlled by the Israeli military.

While, technically, Palestinians who work in settlements are largely covered by Israeli labor laws, there is little enforcement of labor regulations in settlements. As a result, Palestinian workers, including women and children, are frequently exploited by Israeli employers.

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