



BRIEFING FOR CAMPAIGNERS

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an economic alliance principally between the US, Canada and European states. On 16 May 2007, the OECD officially invited Israel to become a member.

Israel's appalling human rights record, ongoing abuses and lack of plural democracy mean that it does not meet the OECD's stated criteria for accession.

Stop the Wall is campaigning to halt the OECD's plans for Israeli membership and hold it accountable to the needs and interests of the people and the values of human rights and equality.

Stop Israel's membership of the OECD!

THE OECD

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an economic alliance principally between the US, Canada and European states.

Its stated aim is to promote market economy, democracy and development within its member states and within other countries. Its core role is that of a global economic think tank and as a forum for negotiations, and it has considerable global influence.

The body has decided to improve its global reach via a call for new members. In the context of the neo-colonial powers aiming to retain dominance, it is not surprising that Israel is among the first applicants that have been invited to the accession process. Israel has been participating in OECD activities since 1996, and views its membership to the OECD as an important step in integration with the global economy.

The Campaign

The campaign begins now. Having accepted the invitation in May, Israel has begun the accession process. This can take one to two years, or, in exceptional circumstances, up to seven.

At the end of the process, the Council will vote on whether Israel is eligible for accession. It will have to meet a range of criteria, from earthquake safety in schools and sustainable forests to economic behavior. Crucially, Israel must also meet international standards of human rights, commitment to peace and democracy, and conformity with the principles of the UN. If the Council is satisfied that Israel has passed the accession process, it will then have to sign and abide by the OECD Convention.

Each member state has a permanent representative to the OECD and one vote on the Council. Every decision must be unanimous.

In order to prevent Israel's entry, solidarity activists and social justice organizations must engage in coordinated efforts to mobilize public opinion and build pressure from the ground so that your representative votes against Israel's accession.

What campaigners can do:

- Organize a public meeting to build the campaign in your area.
- Contact other organizations campaigning on International Financial Institutions, human rights organizations and other parties to encourage them to support the campaign.
- Lobby your country's permanent representative on the Council (names and contact details are given in Appendix C)
- Lobby your representatives in your parliament to put pressure on your government and on the OECD. Write to your representative in the European Parliament, if relevant. There is a suggested model letter in Appendix D.
- Feed into the global campaign: Contact Stop the Wall with responses you receive, news about successful actions and suggestions for further campaign action. Write to global@stopthewall.org.

The Case Against Apartheid Israel

- **Israel's appalling human rights record, ongoing abuses and lack of plural democracy mean that it does not meet the OECD's basic criteria for accession.**
- **The OECD's Convention obligates members to uphold standards. If the OECD allows Israel's membership, it would be failing to meet three key principles set out in the Convention:**
 - ⇒ **Upholding the purposes of the United Nations**
 - ⇒ **Promoting economic development in non-member countries**
 - ⇒ **Promoting international co-operation for the creation of harmonious relations**
- **Israel should therefore be refused entry into the OECD.**
- **These points are detailed in the following briefing. Background information can be found in Appendix A.**

Democracy

Democracy is one the two fundamental yardsticks of suitability for the OECD. The accession process lays out specific requirements in relation to democracy:

Each country must have demonstrated its attachment to the basic values shared by all OECD members: an open market economy, democratic pluralism and respect for human rights

Israel is not a plural democracy.

- **Israel cannot be termed a democracy while it restricts citizenship rights on the basis of raceⁱ.** Israel is an 'ethnocratic' stateⁱⁱ which privileges the Jewish population and excludes the non-Jewish indigenous Palestinian population.
- **The most grievous recent example is the *Nationality and Entry into Israel Law*ⁱⁱⁱ which denies Palestinians with Israeli citizenship the right to acquire citizen status for their spouses from the West Bank and Gaza.** The Supreme Court of Israel has rejected appeals against the order. The law has been condemned by the UN.^{iv}
- **State bodies actively discriminate against non-Jews.** On 18 July 2007, a racist bill entitled the "Jewish National Fund Law" passed its preliminary reading in the Knesset. It stipulates that land owned by the state-controlled Jewish National Fund (JNF) is to be allocated exclusively to Jewish people.^v The Bill now begins the process of passing into law.
- **The Shin Bet intelligence service claims the right to attack entirely legal publications which threaten the "Jewish character" of Israel.^{vi}** Indigenous Palestinians who make up 20% of the population are attacked by the state for organizing to gain political recognition.
- **The Israeli state restricts free civic discourse – a vital sign of democracy – and attempts to exclude all voices that challenge the Jewish-only character of Israeli institutions.** The Minister of Education recently canceled an experimental education program because it included articles by Edward Said and Arab Member of Knesset (MK) Dr. Azmi Bishara.^{vii}
- **The ongoing illegal occupation makes democracy impossible.** 3.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza who have lived under occupation for 40 years are denied democratic rights by Israel. They are repressed with military orders, tried in military courts and detained for years without prosecution or charge. Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, which is under international law part of the West Bank, are even denied their right to vote in Palestinian elections.

Case study: Israeli security services attack Fasl al-Maqal newspaper

On 15 March 2007 the Shin Bet security service wrote to Mr. Ala Hlehel, the Editor of the Fasl al-Maqal newspaper, informing him that:

the Shin Bet is required to thwart the subversive activity of entities seeking to harm the character of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, even if their activity is conducted through democratic means, and this is by virtue of the principle of a "self-defending democracy."^{viii}

The Shin Bet has refused to retract this Kafkaesque statement. For Palestinian citizens of Israel, to engage in activities designed to bring about a plural state by democratic means is to risk attack by the Israeli secret police.



- ii. The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel* (2006). Available from www.mossawacenter.org/files/files/File/Reports/2006/Future%20Vision%20%28English%29.pdf
- iii. English translation available from www.adalah.org/features/famuni/2003family_uni_prop_bill_rev.pdf
- iv. UNHCR *Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee: Israel* (5 May 2003), available from <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/fd807e46661e3689852570d00069e918/2e5a21a17aeb0c0285256d7f004f4d61!OpenDocument>
- v. Adalah, *Land Controlled by Jewish National Fund for Jews Only* (July 2007) <http://www.adalah.org/eng/kkl.php>
- vi. *Letter from Hassan Jabareen, Attorney to Mr. Menachem Mazuz, Attorney General re: Illegal Interference by the Shin Bet* (22 March 2007) available from www.adalah.org/newsletter/eng/mar07/letter.pdf
- vii. Adalah, "Civic Education in Israel", *Adalah's Newsletter, Volume 18* (September 2005) available from www.adalah.org/newsletter/eng/sep05/ar1.pdf
- viii. See note vi.

i. This was noted with concern by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 19th Febr. to 9th Mar. 2007, (CERD/C/ISR/CO/13), available at the UN website.

Human Rights

The OECD accession process lays out specific requirements in relation to human rights:

Each country must have demonstrated its attachment to the basic values shared by all OECD members: an open market economy, democratic pluralism and respect for human rights

Israel does not respect Human Rights.

- **Israel practices racial discrimination and apartheid.** Palestinians living as Israeli citizens are subjected to a two-tier society in which they are consistently discriminated against.
 - ⇒ In March 2007, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination found Israel to be in violation of the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on numerous counts. It expressed concern about Israel's refusal to supply relevant information^{ix}.
 - ⇒ Denial of Palestinian access to land and resources is official Israeli policy within the Green Line. The Israeli Land Administration, which controls 93% of available land openly discriminates against non-Jews, and there is gross inequity in the allocation of state resources on education and housing^x. The proposed "Jewish National Fund Law" is the natural next step, denying Palestinians the right to buy land owned by the JNF under any circumstances.
- **Israel's ongoing human rights abuses are well documented:**
 - ⇒ The UN Human Rights Council lists the 'Palestinian territories occupied since 1967' as one of twelve countries deserving of a special rapporteur to monitor human rights abuses and Israeli actions there should be a permanent item on the agenda.
 - ⇒ Israel has violated nearly all of the rights embodied in the UN covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which has been ratified by Israel.
 - ⇒ Israeli human rights abuses have been documented by Palestinian organizations such as the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, al-Haq and the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, as well as by international observers such as UN Special Rapporteur John Dugard.
- **Israel violates refugee rights.** Israel refuses to allow Palestinian refugees to return to their lands, violating Article 13 (2) of the UN Declaration of Human Rights^{xi}, in spite of UN resolutions demanding that it do so.

Case study: The Palestinian Bedouin tribes in the Naqab/Negev

The experiences of Palestinian Bedouins in the Naqab (Negev) desert reveal Israel's policies of expulsion and apartheid and show how development and economic resources are stifled and human rights trampled upon. The Bedouins have been living on their land for centuries. After the establishment of Israel on Palestinian land and the mass expulsion of the Palestinian population, only 10% of the original population of the Naqab remained and most of their land was confiscated for Zionist colonization. Israel coerced the remaining Palestinian Bedouins into resettling in "reservations" in the North East Naqab or into seven failing government-planned townships ("concentrations", *rekuzim*, as Israeli planners call them). The Bedouins' traditional lifestyle and sources of income were destroyed and they were forced into low-paid, low-skilled labor. The townships receive little public funding, have poor services and no transport infrastructure. Unemployment is rife. Even the Israeli Statistical Yearbook 2002 lists the seven Bedouin townships amongst the lowest ranking local authorities. Many of the Zionist settlements nearby, however, ranked within the top bracket.

The remaining Bedouin villages in the North East Naqab are still unrecognized today and hence barred from public money and basic facilities, such as schools and health care. An ongoing campaign waged by the Israeli authorities to demolish the homes and villages of the Bedouins has seen the destruction of 560 houses during the past three years.

From 2004-5 Israel's GDP leaped from \$129 billion to 156.9 billion but at the same time 60% of Bedouin children lived below the poverty line and one in six Bedouin children in the first grade of school suffered malnutrition, a stark contrast^{xii}.

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- ix. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 19th February to 9th March 2007, (CERD/C/ISR/CO/13), available from the UN website.
 - x. The Arab Association for Human Rights, *Land and Planning Policy in Israel*, <http://www.arabhra.org/factsheets/factsheet2.htm>
 - xi. Article 13 (2) of the UN Declaration of Human Rights states that 'Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country'
 - xii. Figures from a study by Ben Gurion University, published in Haaretz, March 2005

The Purposes of the United Nations

The OECD Convention, signed by member countries, states that members

consider that economic strength and prosperity are essential for the attainment of the purposes of the United Nations; the preservation of individual liberty and the increase of general well-being

Israel has shown no interest in coming into line with the stated purposes of the UN, compliance with UN resolutions or the spirit of the OECD Convention.

The OECD could not reasonably claim to be upholding the purposes of the UN and a general increase in wellbeing were Israel allowed to join the organization.

- **Israel contravenes all of the four 'purposes of the UN'**^{xiii}; to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples; to achieve international co-operation and to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations.

- **Israel's economic strength is used to the negation of these purposes. It is used to sustain:**

- ⇒ Sixty years of occupation and apartheid
- ⇒ Illegal projects such as the construction of the Apartheid Wall, imprisoning the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza.
- ⇒ The denial of "individual liberty" to around 11,000 Palestinian political prisoners
- ⇒ The devastation of the "general wellbeing" of the Palestinian people.

- **Israeli economic strength has never contributed to "general well-being"**

- ⇒ Israeli economic policy in the West Bank and Gaza effectively strangles the Palestinian economy, destroying communities, greatly decreasing standards of living and aggravating Palestinian poverty. Palestinians there are held hostage by walls, razor wire, checkpoints and terminals.
- ⇒ Partially built on the property and infrastructure of Palestinian refugees, the profits of the Israeli economy have been redistributed for the benefit of the Jewish immigrants. Today, the majority of the over six million Palestinian refugees are still living in refugee camps in poverty.
- ⇒ Palestinian villages inside the Green Line lack basic infrastructure, schools for Palestinian children obtain less funding, infrastructure projects discriminate against Palestinian towns.

- **Israel regularly flouts UN resolutions.** Israel is currently in breach of over 100 UN resolutions, including resolution 242 on the withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza and 194 on the return of the refugees. Israel is also refusing to comply with the 2004 International Court of Justice ruling on the illegality of the Apartheid Wall.

- **Israel shows no sign that OECD membership would lead to an improvement in their conformity to UN purposes and decisions.** Since 1947 when the Zionist leadership accepted the UN Partition Plan and then disregarded almost all of its stipulations, Israel has violated all agreements brokered by the UN and the international community. The Israeli government argues that the situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is not relevant to their submissions to international institutions. It is not likely that their approach to the OECD will be any different: nowhere in its document *Israel: Ready for the OECD* does it mention Palestine^{xv}.

- **Israel's economy has been dubbed a "war economy" by many researchers due to the crucial role of the military sector; the role of military exports; state spending on the military and the cyclical wars Israel engages in.**

- ⇒ Israel's agricultural production is largely carried out on Palestinian or Syrian occupied and confiscated lands and fed by illegally appropriated Palestinian water reserves.
- ⇒ Its industrial zones on occupied and illegally confiscated Palestinian lands are growing.
- ⇒ Its cutting edge hi-technology production is to a large extent a result of the high levels of Research & Development funding for the Israeli military apparatus that sustains the occupation, its ability to "test" whatever military or security product on the Palestinian people and the close ties of such activity for "civil" research.

Case study: Israel's Hi-Tech Industry

During 2004 Israel's hi-tech industry went into recession. However, the Occupation used the construction of the Wall to invigorate the sector by contracting Israeli companies to provide hi-tech equipment for the Wall, checkpoint and terminals. Upon the Wall's completion, an estimated \$400 million will have been spent on equipment such as CCTV cameras, fingerprinting technology and communications devices.

As the Wall, checkpoints and terminals directly devastate Palestinian life, exacerbate social and economic problems and destroy entire communities, Israel has strengthened its economy by actively negating the 'UN principles', 'individual liberty' and 'general wellbeing.'

xiii. These purposes are stated in Article 1 of the Charter of the UN.

xiv. Israel's submission to the OECD, *Israel: Ready for the OECD* www.oecd.gov.il/Oecd_docs/book1_all.pdf

International co-operation

The Convention states that members are

convinced that broader co-operation will make a vital contribution to peaceful and harmonious relations among peoples of the world.

Israel's efforts at international co-operation have been principally focused on obtaining economic support for its illegal occupation, contrary to the stated purpose of the OECD. The OECD must not reward Israel with OECD membership.

- **Israel has appealed for international investment in and support for the joint projects in the illegally constructed Industrial Zones.**
 - ⇒ The Industrial Zones are situated between the Green Line and the Apartheid Wall in order to exploit cheap Palestinian labor.
 - ⇒ Palestinian workers who have had their lands and livelihoods confiscated by the occupation are coerced into accepting exploitative and unprotected labor conditions in Israeli companies in the Industrial Zones.
 - ⇒ This economic "co-operation" between Palestine and Israel has the intention and effect of suffocating an independent Palestinian economy.
- **Israel has appealed for international investment in the Apartheid Roads system in the West Bank.** In September 2006, the Israeli government announced the construction of a new 'Jews only' road which will carve through the West Bank^{xvi}. 500 km of such roads are planned.
- **Israel has a history of supporting foreign economies that profit from human rights abuses.** Israel was the only country in the world that consistently refused to join the sanctions against apartheid South Africa, and it has reportedly breached several arms embargo resolutions as well as embargoes on the diamond trade^{xvii}.
- **Israel has expressed no interest in changing its policy of co-operation in the service of occupation.** Nowhere in *Israel: Ready for the OECD* does it state how its membership of the OECD will enable it to end the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the discrimination and expulsion of the Palestinian people. These are not only war crimes: they are the very factors that render "peaceful and harmonious relations" in the Middle East impossible. *Israel: Ready for the OECD* does not mention the West Bank and the Gaza Strip anywhere in the document.
- **Israel's regional economic cooperation with Egypt and Jordan has not resulted in any progress whatsoever towards the end of Israeli military occupation.** It was engineered by Israel to continue its policies without having to bear repercussions, such as the ongoing Arab boycott.

- **Israel poses a constant threat to the development of its neighbours.** Last year's complete destruction of Lebanese infrastructure in the south and in parts of Beirut during the bombing campaign launched by Israeli aircraft and warships has not contributed to the process of economic development underway in Lebanon after almost 20 years of Israeli occupation.

Case study: Joint Industrial Zones

The illegal construction of the Wall has separated Palestinians from their land, destroyed retained farmland by confiscating water resources and ruined tertiary industries by isolating them from their customers. Israel has then encouraged foreign investors to exploit these destitute people as a cheap labor force: Joint Industrial Zones are constructed in Palestinian lands isolated between the Wall and the Green Line.

The land, owned by Palestinians and confiscated by Israel, is governed by special employment laws, so the workers have very few rights. Wages are also set at \$300-\$400 a month (the average Israeli wage is \$1100 a month by comparison), and trade unions are not recognized. So, the former farmers/small business owners are forced by economic necessity into these low-skilled jobs in Joint Industrial Zones and become dependent on them for employment, while Israeli factories which re-locate to these zones exploit Palestinian workers to keep costs down and gain competitive advantages in international markets.

The Joint Industrial Zones are just one example of a series of projects Israel proposes to the international and Arab world in terms of "co-operation". Yet, the majority of these projects are in no way advancing 'peaceful and harmonious relations' as claimed but further entrenching the occupation. The participation of the international community in these projects further strengthens Israel's position in defense of the occupation and drags the international community into complicity with Israeli breaches of international law and violations of Palestinian rights.



- xvi. Stop The Wall, *Israel Announce New Apartheid Road*, 14th September 2006, www.stophthewall.org
- xvii. See the forthcoming publication from Stop the Wall, *Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions: A strategy for resistance*, which will be available from the Stop the Wall website, www.stophthewall.org

Economic development

The OECD Convention, signed by member countries, states that members shall promote policies designed to

Contribute to sound economic expansion in Member as well as non-member states in the process of economic development [... members must also:]

Pursue their efforts to reduce or abolish obstacles to the exchange of goods and services and current payments and maintain and extend the liberalization of capital movements [Article 2 d)];

Israel's illegal occupation, and the resulting system of closure and ghettoization, has made movement of goods impossible and ruined the Palestinian economy. The OECD must not reward Israel with OECD membership.

Israel's occupation of Palestine and the illegal Wall have devastated communities, increased unemployment and disabled the Palestinian infrastructure to the point where economic development on their own terms is impossible.

- The Apartheid Wall, checkpoints and terminals has created a system of Palestinian ghettos, and has confiscated 83% of the West Bank's water resources and 46% of the land.
- Israel promotes development along apartheid lines, similar to the Bantustan dependency policies forged by apartheid South Africa.
- Even the World Bank concludes that Israel is placing severe restrictions on free movement within Palestine, with dire consequences for the Palestinian economy:

In economic terms, the restrictions arising from closure have not only increased transaction costs, but have also led to a level of uncertainty and inefficiency which has made the conduct of business difficult and therefore has stymied the growth and investment which is necessary to fuel economic revival^{xiii}.

xiii. World Bank Technical Team's report, *Movement and Access Restrictions in the West Bank: Uncertainty and Inefficiency in the Palestinian Economy* (May 2007). See also *Stop the Wall's World Bank Proposes Oiling the Prison Gates* (September 2006), available from the Stop the Wall website, www.stopthewall.org

Case study: Economic policy in the Jordan Valley.

The Occupation has confiscated fertile land from Palestinian farmers for Israeli settlers and agriculture. Again, Palestinian workers are being exploited as a cheap labour force, similar to the situation in the Joint Industrial Zones: The system of checkpoints and restrictions on movements means it is virtually impossible for Palestinian farmers to export goods to Palestinian markets in the rest of the West Bank. Carmel Agrexco, a 50%-state-owned Israeli company has de facto captured the monopoly on packaging and export to internal and external markets, changing prices and demand as it wishes.

The theft of land and water resources, destruction of markets and import/export possibilities and the destruction of Palestinian companies and factories over the last years of this intifada have only further exasperated the Israeli economic policies to create a dependent and underdeveloped Palestinian economy that caters to the needs of Israeli capital.



Question & Answer

1. Israel can be expected to argue that Palestinian economy in the West Bank and Gaza is not relevant to the discussion.

- **As an occupying power, Israel has specific legal obligations in relation to the West Bank and Gaza.**
- Israel, as the occupying power with effective jurisdiction over the West Bank and Gaza Strip, has both affirmative obligations to promote and protect workers' rights as articulated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights^{xix} as well as proscriptive responsibilities as set out in the Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War, to not impinge upon the rights of civilians living under occupation by committing acts such as destroying personal or community property, or restricting access to jobs in order to induce workers to seek employment with the occupying power.

As long as Israel continues to occupy the Palestinian territories and deny self-determination to the Palestinian people, it will continue to bear the legal (not to mention moral) duty to safeguard the basic wellbeing of those civilians living under its control.

2. Detractors are likely to argue that there are other countries who have been invited, and indeed others within the OECD already, who have a poor record on human rights. Why are we singling out Israel?

- **This is a campaign led by Palestinians and groups in solidarity with Palestine, and it is appropriate that it focus on issues directly relevant to Palestine.**
- Israel is blatantly and consistently in violation of its human rights obligations. It is appropriate that this fact should be raised forcefully with the Council considering Israel's entry to the OECD.
- Even taking into account valid concerns about the human rights records of other OECD member countries and new invitees, Israel is exceptional:
 - ⇒ Unique among OECD members and invitees, Israel is engaged in an illegal occupation that has lasted forty years – the longest occupation in the world today.
 - ⇒ Israel is responsible for the largest and longest standing body of refugees in the world - it is sixty years since the *Nakba* - and over six million Palestinians in the diaspora are denied the right to return to their homes: more than a quarter of all the world's refugees are Palestinian.
 - ⇒ Unique among OECD members and invitees, Israel has racial discrimination and opposition to plural democracy as a founding principle of the state, and actively carries out policies of apartheid.
- Other groups are perfectly entitled to raise questions about the record of other countries seeking entry, such as Russia, or indeed about countries who are already members despite their dubious human rights record, such as Turkey, the US and UK.

3. Detractors may argue that were Israel a member of the OECD, they would have to adhere to the principles of membership, which would result in an improvement of the situation for the Palestinian people.

- **This is wishful thinking. Israel has been a member of the UN since 1949, and it has not led to any improvement in their co-operation with UN resolutions or principles, or any mitigation of their policies of occupation and apartheid towards the Palestinian people.**
- **Israel argues that the situation in the West Bank and Gaza strip is not relevant to their submissions to international institutions.** In their 2007 submissions to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination they refused to make any reference to these territories, despite being asked to do so^{xx}. It is not likely that their approach to the OECD will be any different: nowhere in its document *Israel: Ready for the OECD* does it mention Palestine^{xxi}.
- **Israel views its membership to the OECD as an important step in integration into the global economy.** Further integration will enhance Israel's standing and perpetuate the myth that Israel is a legitimate and respectable international economy built on principles of respect for democracy, human rights and international law.

xix. See specifically articles 2,6 7 and 8 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

xx. United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 19th February to 9th March 2007, CERD/C/ISR/CO/13

xxi. Israel's submission to the OECD, *Israel: Ready for the OECD* www.oecd.gov.il/Oecd_docs/book1_all.pdf

APPENDIX A - Background

The OECD

The OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) was established in 1961 as an economic alliance between the 18 Marshall Plan recipients, the US and Canada. It states its aims as follows:

The OECD's stated aim is to bring together the governments of countries committed to democracy and the market economy from around the world to:

- ⇒ Support sustainable economic growth
- ⇒ Boost employment
- ⇒ Raise living standards
- ⇒ Maintain financial stability
- ⇒ Assist other countries' economic development
- ⇒ Contribute to growth in world trade

Different to other international finance institutions (IFIs), the OECD's core role is that of a global think tank as well as a forum for discussion and negotiations. The recommendations, analysis and agreements reached by the OECD have considerable influence across the global economic polity.

At the time of its founding, the OECD countries combined to hold more than three-quarters of global GDP and as much as 90 percent of world trade. While the share of the OECD bloc in the global economy has gradually declined since its foundation, the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc has turned the OECD into the world's undisputed center of economic analysis and discussion.

Today the OECD faces new trends towards independent development and regional alliances in the Global South (including China and partially Russia). The body has decided to improve its global reach via a call for new members to maintain what OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría has termed a "relevant" multilateral organization.

Israel was invited to engage in open accession discussions with a view to membership on 16th May 2007. Israel has been participating in OECD activities since 1996. It views its membership to the OECD as an important step in the economy's integration into the global economy as a developed and modern economy.

The acceptance of Israel to the accession process demonstrates:

- ⇒ how the high-sounding founding principles of the OECD can readily be pushed aside when economic and power interests are at stake
- ⇒ Israel's role in facilitating the hegemony of the West not only in the Arab world but globally.

OECD structure and process

The OECD headquarters are in Paris and the Secretary General is Angel Gurría, from Mexico.

Current members are:

Australia	Finland	Ireland
Austria	France	Italy
Belgium	Germany	Japan
Canada	Greece	Korea
Czech Republic	Hungary	Luxembourg
Denmark	Iceland	Mexico
Netherlands	Poland	Switzerland
New Zealand	Slovak Republic	Turkey
Norway	Spain	United Kingdom
Portugal	Sweden	United States

The OECD accession process and Convention

Once a country has accepted the invitation to join the OECD, it must then go through the accession process, at the end of which each member of the Council votes on whether or not the country 'qualifies' for membership. Each country has a permanent representative to the OECD (usually an ambassador) who sits on the Council, and they have one vote each. Every decision must be unanimous.

During this process the country must demonstrate it can meet various criteria, and prove it is capable of adhering to the OECD's 'legal instruments' (various laws and stipulations that the Organization passes on everything from earthquake safety in schools to sustainable forests). The country must also be able to demonstrate it can implement the 'Codes' which relate specifically to economic behavior. A number of different committees judge on different criteria.

During this process, any member of the Council can raise issues of a political nature with the Secretary General which he must discuss with the relevant country in the context of the accession process.



APPENDIX C: Contact details for OECD representatives

The United Nations

The United Nations (UN) was established in 1945. The purposes of the UN as stated in Article 1 of the Charter of the UN are:

To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;

To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;

To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and

To be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

APPENDIX B: Further Information

Israel's abuses of Palestinian human rights

www.stopthewall.org

www.pchr.org

www.adalah.org

www.ittijah.org

Israel's entry into the OECD

Israel sets out its case for joining on the OECD website the government has set up (www.oecd.gov.il) and in particular, in the document *Israel: Ready for the OECD* http://www.oecd.gov.il/Oecd_docs/book1_all.pdf

[You can read more about the OECD at www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)

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APPENDIX D - SAMPLE LETTER

to MPs (or MEPs) and national representatives to the OECD

Dear ...

I note with concern that Israel has been invited to engage in open accession discussions with a view to membership of the OECD. I do not believe that Israel can meet the criteria set out in the accession process nor abide with the OECD Convention.

I am asking you to open a debate on this subject and express your firm opposition to the membership of Israel of the OECD.

I understand eligibility for OECD membership rests on the demonstration of a respect for human rights and democratic pluralism. Members must adhere to the principles of the OECD as outlined in its Convention, including a commitment to the purposes of the UN. Further, the OECD claims to be based on the understanding that countries have a responsibility to use their economic strength to establish peaceful relations and to support the economic development of member and non-member states.

Israel, however, does not comply with any of these fundamental principles of the OECD. Israel has violated dozens of UN resolutions, from resolution 194 guaranteeing the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes, to the UN endorsement of the verdict of the International Court of Justice on the illegality of the Wall, the occupation and the Israeli settlements on Palestinian land. Palestinians face daily human rights abuses. Palestinians with Israeli citizenship are systematically discriminated against in almost all spheres of life, Palestinians in Jerusalem are undergoing a slow but incessant process of expulsion and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are enclosed in their residential areas by walls, settlements and hundreds of checkpoints, gates and terminals.

Israel's cynical use of economic power over the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank has culminated in more than a year of economic siege. Palestinian money is withheld or released, the gates that allow the West Bank and Gaza access to the outside world and necessary goods are opened and closed according only to the political and economic interests of the occupation. Yet these mechanisms are only part of the economic policies that bolster Israeli occupation and apartheid, grounded in strategic destruction of Palestinian economic infrastructure.

Palestinian organizations and international bodies, such as the UN Human Rights Council, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and even the World Bank in its latest reports, concur from their different viewpoints that Israeli policies are systematically destroying any possibility for Palestinian economic survival and prevent the attainment of peace, self-determination and equality.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the growing global movement that endorses the Palestinian unified call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions as the most effective international means to end Israel's violation of human rights and international law and to implement Palestinian rights to self-determination, their land and the return of the refugees. The global integration of Israel over the last 60 years has not furthered the implementation of international law in Palestine. Only concrete pressure that conditions Israeli participation within the international community - as this was the case with Apartheid South Africa - on the respect of its rules can truly make a difference.

I therefore request you to bear these factors in mind when discussing Israel's possible membership and use your voice to lobby against their membership of the OECD.

Yours sincerely