

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### ***Ben & Jerry's fails to end its Complicity in Israel's Occupation and Abuses of Palestinian Human Rights according to Vermonters for Justice in Palestine***

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The July 19th 2021 announcement from Ben & Jerry's <https://www.benjerry.com/about-us/media-center/palestine-statement> announces that

*"Ben & Jerry's Will End Sales of Our Ice Cream in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" and continues:*

*"We believe it is inconsistent with our values for Ben & Jerry's ice cream to be sold in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). We also hear and recognize the concerns shared with us by our fans and trusted partners.*

*We have a longstanding partnership with our licensee, who manufactures Ben & Jerry's ice cream in Israel and distributes it in the region. We have been working to change this, and so we have informed our licensee that we will not renew the license agreement when it expires at the end of next year.*

*Although Ben & Jerry's will no longer be sold in the OPT, we will stay in Israel through a different arrangement. We will share an update on this as soon as we're ready."*

Ben & Jerry's intended actions fail to address the widespread anger at the actions of the Israeli government against Palestinian people who live in occupied territory, or who are refugees denied their legitimate right to return to their former homes. According to VTJP member Kathy Shapiro "By maintaining a presence in Israel, Ben & Jerry's continues to be complicit in the killing, imprisonment and dispossession of Palestinian people and the flaunting of international law. Israel destroys lives and property in the lands it occupies by force."

Vermonters for Justice in Palestine (VTJP) continues to call on Ben & Jerry's to:

1. End the marketing, catering and sales of Ben & Jerry's products in Israel and Jewish-only settlements in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank.
2. Stop manufacturing ice cream in Israel.
3. Issue a statement (a) calling on Israel to end its occupation and settlement enterprise and (b) appealing directly to other socially responsible companies to do likewise and to cease business operations in Israel and its illegal settlements.

These three demands have been clearly stated in a series of petitions directed to the CEO and others at Ben & Jerry's. Now, seven years after our campaign has drawn attention to Ben & Jerry's complicity with

the illegal and immoral actions of its licensee in Israel they have finally moved eventually to end sales of their ice cream in illegal settlements, which they have admitted represent a very small part of their business in Palestine/Israel. However, their licensee will continue to operate in Israel for another seventeen months, and the company will remain in Israel in a form yet to be announced.

Ben & Jerry's fails to recognize that Israel has been identified as an Apartheid State, and their factory there is [built on stolen land](#) near the demolished Palestinian village of Qastina. Their attempt to normalize the widely recognized Apartheid practiced by the Israeli government and military is completely inconsistent with the company's stated [social mission](#). VTJP member and Palestinian refugee Wafic Faour asserts that "since 1947, Palestinian people have been victimized by Israeli Zionists who have arrived there through racially-selective immigration policies. Ben & Jerry's should completely disengage from Israel and apologize for their normalization with an Apartheid state over the past decades".

The [campaign by VTJP](#) has included meetings with Ben & Jerry's management and members of their Board of Directors, direct appeals to scoop shop owners and recipients of grant funding from the Ben & Jerry's Foundation, and several petitions signed by thousands of people directed to the company's management. This campaign has been joined by petitions organized by Decolonize Burlington [VT] and by SumOfUs.org.

*[Vermonters for Justice in Palestine](#) works to support the Palestinian people in their struggle for human rights and to end Israel's illegal and immoral occupation of Palestinian lands through education, advocacy, and action.*