

EU trade policy cannot ignore the Geneva conventions: the European Parliament must reject the ACAA protocol with Israel

On 23 October, a vote will take place in the European Parliament on the ACAA (Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products) protocol attached to the European Union-Israel Association Agreement. **The ACAA protocol must be rejected because Israel openly and knowingly violates international human rights law. Members of the European Parliament must vote no to ACAA and choose to stand for human rights in Palestine and worldwide.**

Negotiations on the ACAA Protocol initially started in early 2009, soon after the Israeli attack on Gaza that killed more than 1,400 Palestinians, including more than 300 children.¹ Negotiations were suspended in June 2010, following the Israeli attack on the Gaza flotilla on 31 May 2010, where nine civilians were murdered. No one in the Israeli military has been held to account for any of these killings, yet on 18 September 2012, the European Parliament Committee on International Trade (INTA) passed the ACAA Protocol, leading to the upcoming vote on 23 October in the EU Parliament.

The protocol recognises that Israeli pharmaceutical products are manufactured in conformity with European standards, thereby granting them easier access to the EU market and setting a precedent for greater access of other Israeli industrial products. This access to EU markets that the ACAA protocol would provide to Israel is in stark contrast to Israel's stranglehold on the Palestinian economy, in general, and the pharmaceutical sector in particular. For example, the Israeli Ministry of Health only allows drugs registered in Israel to enter the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), blocking drugs from neighbouring Arab countries and more importantly denying access to cheaper generic pharmaceuticals produced in countries like China and India. Any upgrade in EU-Israel trade relations fails to address well-documented ongoing violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.² The EU-Israel Association Agreement is itself conditional on respect for human rights. It clearly states in article 2 that "Relations between the Parties, as well as all the provisions of the Agreement itself, shall be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles".

In a global and interlinked world, EU trade policy cannot exist in a vacuum, ignoring fundamental human rights standards and disconnected from situations on the ground such as in Israel and the OPT. EU trade policies cannot contradict longstanding EU demands for an end to Human Rights violations by rewarding the perpetrator of these violations, Israel, with increased access to EU markets.

Signatories:

ACSUR-Las Segovias

¹ See Amnesty International's report: "Operation 'Cast Lead': 22 days of death and destruction" at www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE15/015/2009/en/8f299083-9a74-4853-860f-0563725e633a/mde150152009en.pdf

² See Al-Haq's monitoring and documentation reports at www.al-haq.org/ and Amnesty International's 2012 annual report on Israel and the Palestinian Occupied Territories at www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE15/015/2009/en/8f299083-9a74-4853-860f-0563725e633a/mde150152009en.pdf

Alternatives Asia
Association Belgo-Palestinienne
Associazione per la pace (Italian Peace Association)
Association internationale des Techniciens, Experts et Chercheurs (AITEC, France)
Attac-France
BDS Italia
BDS Group Berlin
Belgian movement for international solidarity - intal
Biladi Palestinian Association
Boycott! Supporting the Palestinian BDS Call from within (Israeli citizens for BDS)
City of Leicester NUT
COBI - Coordination Boycott Israel, Belgium
Council For the Advancement of Arab British Understanding (caabu)
Comité de Soutien au Peuple Palestinien, Belgique
Ecologistas en Accion (Espagne)
Frantz Fanon Foundation
Gruppo di sostegno alla Palestina - Milano
LAP-Leuvense Actiegroep Palestina, Belgium
Russell Tribunal on Palestine
Stichting Diensten en Onderzoek Centrum Palestina (Netherlands)
Support from Netherlands Palestine Committee!
Vredesactie
War on Want (UK)