

CALL FOR ACTION

REFUSE THE INSTALLATION OF THE ISRAELI COMPANY AGREXCO IN SETE !

Not a single euro of public money should be used against the Palestinian people !

Support the creation of jobs that respect Palestinian rights and protect Languedoc farmers

In the middle of the war against the population of Gaza last January, Georges Frêche, President of the Languedoc-Roussillon region, announced, on behalf of the whole Regional Council, the setting-up of the Israeli company AGREXCO in Sète harbour with wholesale promises of job creations and regional grants. Incorporating this move within a 200 million euro investment plan for the next 10 years, he pledged – in a context of upcoming regional elections – the creation of 200 jobs and 500,000 tonnes of additional traffic. Even though this was obviously a media coup, the facts are that the Italian harbour operator, the GF Group, won the call for tender for exploiting a new fruit transit terminal and a container terminal at “Port Sud de France” (the new name of Sète harbour according to Frêche), and that Agrexco won the call for tender for the export of fruits and vegetables and signed an agreement with the Regional authorities. Together with widely publicized visits of top managers from these two groups to France and of that of Frêche to Israel, everything indicates that this is an ongoing process and that burying one’s head in the sand will have serious consequences.

THE ANTI-HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL CONDEMNED BY THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

In 2002, the European Parliament voted for the freezing of Europe’s Association Agreements with Israel, due to Israel’s failure to respect Human Rights, in Palestine but also in Israel with respect to Israeli Arabs.

On 4 December 2008, underlining the persistence of the problem, most members of the European parliament voted against the “upgrade” of the Association Agreements with Israel.

THE COLONIALIST POLICY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL CONDEMNED BY INTERNATIONAL BODIES

In July 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) condemned the building of the WALL on Palestinian territory and called for its demolition.

In December 2008, the President of the UN General Assembly, Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann, asked the UN to qualify Israel’s policy as ‘Apartheid’ and issued a call to support the non-violent campaign of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel.

GAZA: ISRAEL’S CRIMINAL POLICY CONDEMNED BY PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

1414 killed, among them 313 children, 6000 wounded in 22 days, an overwhelming majority of civilians among them and the targeted destruction of homes, health and education facilities, agricultural land, etc. Millions of people demonstrated to denounce Israeli army war crimes. Richard Falk, UN observer for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories since 1967, claimed at the end of the war that the weapons used and the attacks against civilians established that: “Israeli reliance on a military approach to defeat or punish Gaza was intrinsically “criminal”, and as such demonstrative of both violations of the law of war and the commission of crimes against humanity.”

AGREXCO, A DIRECT TOOL OF AGRICULTURAL COLONIZATION

Out of respect for Human Rights, on moral grounds and justice and for the decisions taken by international bodies, the above reasons would be enough in themselves to refuse the establishment of any Israeli company in Sète or anywhere else, since all Israeli companies profit, directly or not, from the colonial policy, which has been condemned by international bodies for decades!

Furthermore the choice of AGREXCO (fruits, vegetables and flowers) is a caricature since it is the leading tool of agricultural colonization. First, the company directly applies the policy of the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture, which owns 50% of its shares. Second, it sells 70% of the agricultural goods produced in West Bank settlements (this was admitted by the UK Agrexco director during a trial in 2006). In particular, Agrexco sells the products of Jordan valley settlements, where 7,000 settlers have grabbed 95% of the land and 98% of the water resources, reducing the Palestinian farmers to misery or exile !

THE CHOICE OF AGREXCO RUNS COUNTER TO ETHICAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS VALUES

Would one have accepted during the 70's, during the darkest years of South African Apartheid – for the sole sake of creating jobs – the establishment of the “Outspan” company, creating an inlet for “Outspan” oranges, the symbol of a worldwide rejection of Apartheid ? For us the situation calls for the same political pressure to be brought to bear! This is why we are supporting the “BDS call” launched by 171 Palestinian organizations in July 2005 to reject this settlement.

Yes, the question of employment is a vital issue, but our concern for Sète harbour jobs and activities also means that we care about jobs in agriculture. What would be the consequences of mass imports of heavily subsidized Israeli fruits and vegetables on the farming economy in our region? And subsequently, what are the subsequent risks of food shortages and of losses of farming know-how? Should we – on the pretext of creating precarious docker jobs on the unloading quay, torpedo existing farmers' jobs? What is even worse is that this would be done with public money! No, no, a thousand times, no!

And since the President of the Regional Council has announced a 200 million euro investment plan over 10 years, it is undoubtedly possible to set up alternative projects, which would create real jobs for Sète harbour, meshed with another type of regional development more respectful of agriculture and infrastructures, and in agreement with ethical and human rights values.

We call upon all organizations, parties, unions and associations to join this coalition: “For jobs that do not run counter to ethics and regional agriculture, against the installation of AGREXCO in Sète”.

**Press Conference 4 June, 10 am, Espace Martin Luther King
Rally / Demonstration 25 June, Montpellier (the time and place will be communicated later)**

Traduction : JPB-CCIPPP

Endorsements:

Les signataires (A la date du 10 juin) :

AC! 34 (Agir ensemble contre le Chomage et la précarité)

AFD France (Alliance for Freedom and Dignity)

AFPS (Association France Palestine Solidarité)

ALTERNATIFS

APJ (Les Américains pour la Paix et la Justice, Montpellier)

AP-LR (Association des Palestiniens Languedoc-Roussillon)

APTI (Association pour la Promotion des Travailleurs Immigrés 30)

ASSOCIATION ESPRIT LIBRE (Béziers 34)

ASSOCIATION SALAM (66)

ASTI (Association de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés, 66)

ATTAC (Sète-Bassin de Thau, Montpellier)

CAPJPO (Europalestine)

CCIPPP (Campagne Civile Internationale pour la Protection du Peuple Palestinien),

CIMADE,

CJACP (Collectif Judéo Arabe et Citoyen pour la Paix – Strasbourg)

CMF (Collectif des Musulmans de France),

COMITE BDS (Comité Boycott, Désinvestissement, Sanctions, Montpellier)

COLLECTIF PALESTINE (Narbonne),

COLLECTIF 69 DE SOUTIEN AU PEUPLE PALESTINIEN

CONFEDERATION PAYSANNE,

CREF (Centre Râzi d'Enseignement et de Formation,66)

CRI (Coordination contre le Racisme et l'Islamophobie)

CUALs (Comités Unitaires pour une Alternative au Libéralisme : Mtp Centre, Mtp. Cévennes Petit Bard, ,

Mtp.La

Paillade, Mèze)

EXPRESSION MUSULMANE (66)

FEDERATION 34 (pour une alternative Sociale et Ecologique au Libéralisme)

GENERATION PALESTINE
IDENTITE PLURIELLE (66)
IJAN (Réseau Juif Antisioniste International)
Les Femmes en Noir (Caen)
Les Verts (Languedoc-Roussillon, Sète),
LDH (Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, sections : Alès, Montpellier, Uzès, Sainte Anastasie)
LISTE EGALITE (Bruxelles- Belgique)
MAN (Mouvement pour une Alternative Non violente)
MDPL (Mouvement pour le Désarmement la Paix et la Liberté)
MIB (Mouvement Immigration Banlieues)
MIR (Mouvement des Indigènes de la République)
MdIP (Mouvement de La Paix, Montpellier)
MOTIVES (Montagnac 34)
NPA (Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste)
PALESTINE PORTE VOIX (Carcassonne)
PARASOL (Palestine, Résistance, Action Solidarité),
PCF (Parti Communiste Français)
PG (Parti de Gauche)
POLE ETHIQUE (66)
RESISTANCE 30
RESISTANCE PALESTINE (69)
STOP APARTHEID (31)
SUD EDUCATION (11, 34)
UCCFMM (30)
UNION SYNDICALE SOLIDAIRES 34
UJFP (Union Juive Française pour la Paix)
VIVRE EN PAIX