



The Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC) is a wide coalition of the largest Palestinian mass organizations, trade unions, networks and organizations.

BNC member organizations:

Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine

Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO)

Palestinian Nat'l Institute for NGOs

Global Palestine Right of Return Coalition

Palestinian Trade Union Coalition for BDS (PTUC-BDS)

Federation of Indep. Trade Unions

Gen. Union of Palestinian Workers

Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions

Gen. Union of Palestinian Women

Union of Palestinian Farmers

Gen. Union of Palestinian Teachers

Gen. Union of Palestinian Writers

Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees (PFUUE)

Union of Professional Associations

Gen. Union of Palestinian Peasants

Union of Public Employees in Palestine-Civil Sector

Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (STW)

Nat'l Committee for Grassroots Resistance

Pal. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)

Nat'l Committee to Commemorate the Nakba

Civic Coalition for the Defense of Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem

Coalition for Jerusalem

Union of Pal. Charitable Organizations

Palestinian Economic Monitor

Union of Youth Activity Centers-Palestine Refugee Camps

Occupied Palestine and Syrian Golan Heights Initiative

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Seizing on Agrexco's financial woes, campaigners vow to eject Israeli exporter from Europe

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

25-7-2011

Occupied Palestine- Facing a bankruptcy hearing in a Tel Aviv court Tuesday, Israeli export company Agrexco has been beset by bad headlines in recent months. Now its problems look set to worsen, after Palestinian solidarity groups from across Europe joined forces to escalate a boycott campaign.

A new coalition on Thursday promised to "put an end to Agrexco's presence in Europe". Twenty-three groups signed a declaration saying they had established a mechanism to coordinate boycott campaigns and court actions against the exporter.

"We are putting potential buyers on notice: any company investing in Agrexco will be targeted by boycotts all over Europe," said Saqer Nazzal who represents the Palestinian Union of Professional Associations on the secretariat of the Palestinian Boycott Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC).

The alliance of European groups such as the French Coalition contre Agrexco have set Saturday 26 November as a pan-European day of action against the company.

Campaigners have drawn attention to the exporter's involvement with illegal Israeli settlements with stunts, pickets and direct action. Last month in Milan, activists delivered gift baskets of rotten fruit and vegetables to the company's HQ, symbolizing Palestinian agricultural products rotting at Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank, while Agrexco freely exports to Europe.

In June, Israeli financial publication Globes reported "heavy losses" for the fresh produce company, as Agrexco struggled to manage its debt. Fruitnet.com recently reported the company owed creditors €106 million.

Shir Hever, an Israeli economist with the AIC in Jerusalem said: "many Israeli farmers are abandoning Agrexco, possibly because of the campaigns against Agrexco in France, Italy, Spain, the UK and elsewhere. Maybe the Agrexco brand is no longer as appealing to farmers as it was before. It's no coincidence in my opinion that Agrexco shows the first signs of strain."

Agrexco has been a prime target of pro-Palestine activists calling for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel.

Half-owned by the Israeli government, Agrexco is responsible for 60-70% of the agricultural produce grown in Israel's illegal settlements in occupied Palestinian territories (OPT).

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NOTES FOR EDITORS:

* The full declaration is titled “Political declaration of the European Forum Against Agrexco” and is available on the BNC website. Direct link: <http://bit.ly/agrexcoBDS>

* Sources: “Agrexco proposes 35% haircut to bondholders”, Globes, 23 June: <http://bit.ly/nqk1qY>

“Agrexco trustee wants worker cuts”, Fruitnet.com, 18 July: <http://bit.ly/oaylrl>

“Agrexco Agricultural Export Company”, WhoProfits.org database

* Sold under brand names such as Carmel, Coral, Biotop and Eco-Fresh, Agrexco products from settlements have routinely been mislabelled and submitted with papers claiming they originate inside the Green Line. Such attempts to fraudulently qualify them for preferential customs treatment under the EU-Israel Association Agreement have led to censure in the British Parliament.

* The EU Court of Justice has ruled that settlement produce should not qualify for such preferential treatment. In February 2011, a report of the commercial court in Montpellier, France, found that Carmel Agrexco deliberately misled customs officials about the origin of their produce.

* The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) is a coalition of Palestinian civil society groups. It was formed as the Palestinian reference point in the broad campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), which resulted in the July 2005 Palestinian Call for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel, with the initial endorsement of over 170 Palestinian organizations.