

## Canadian Protestant church launches settlement boycott campaign

The United Church of Canada calls for 'economic action' against three Israeli companies: Keter Plastic Ltd., SodaStream and Ahava.

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Canada's largest Protestant church launched a campaign to boycott goods made in the West Bank.

The United Church of Canada campaign, dubbed "Unsettling Goods: Choose Peace in Palestine and Israel," encourages "economic action" against three Israeli companies: Keter Plastic Ltd., SodaStream and Ahava, which all have factories in the West Bank.

"With these efforts, we join with many others striving to bring peace with justice to the Holy Land," the church's moderator, Gary Paterson, wrote in a November letter to church members announcing the launch of the campaign.

Churchgoers are also urged to avoid retailers carrying the products, such as Canadian Tire, The Bay, Home Depot and Walmart.

The church effort is "nothing less than an assault on the Jewish people," said a statement from the Toronto-based Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center.

"The echoes of the past history of Church-sanctioned anti-Semitism continue to grow stronger," said Avi Benlolo, president of the center, who accused the church of giving "tacit support for the hatred and terror" against Israel.

Frank Dimant, CEO of B'nai Brith Canada, noted that SodaStream, which makes products to carbonate tap water, employs close to 1,000 Palestinians at its Ma'ale Adumim manufacturing facility alone.

"If individuals and groups, such as the United Church, who promote boycotts of Israeli products would only take the time to examine the facts, they would realize who they really are hurting," he said.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, which runs BUYcott Israel, an initiative to encourage Canadians to buy Israeli products, called the church initiative "an abysmal failure."