THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

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July 13, 2017

Vincent Caron
Senior Policy Advisor - Corporate Affairs
LCBO

Re: July 11, 2017 letter to All Sacramental Wine Vendors

Dear Mr. Caron:

Greetings to you from The United Church of Canada, this country's largest Protestant church. The United Church has some 3,000 congregations across Canada, with members found in nearly every community in Ontario.

The United Church has a long history of working with others to seek peace with justice in Israel and Palestine. We work with about 100 global partner organizations, several of which are located in Israel and the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories. The church`s work there is rooted in the biblical mandate to be peacemakers and in response to the calls of partner organizations in Palestine and Israel. For more information about The United Church of Canada`s work related to seeking a just peace in the Holy Land, see Unsettling Goods: Choose Peace in Palestine and Israel.

These global partnership commitments lead us to write the LCBO to express appreciation for the action outlined in your letter of July 11, 2017. The United Church of Canada values and affirms the LCBO leadership in demonstrating compliance with international law.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency properly "clarified that "Product of Israel" would not be an acceptable country of origin declaration for wine products that have been made from grapes that are grown, fermented, processed, blended and finished in the West Bank". Government of Canada policy makes clear that our country does not recognize Israel's sovereignty over Palestinian territories occupied by Israel in 1967. In 2013, in a submission to Consultations on the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA), the United Church encouraged the federal government to **exclude products made in illegal settlements from beneficial treatment under CIFTA, and to provide regulations for Canadian retailers that would require them to label goods from illegal settlements differently from products made in Israel** (see Submission of the United Church of Canada to Consultations on the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement). Labelling regulations and guidelines on settlement products have been introduced by all European Union countries, and are currently being considered by other governments.

We believe that inaccurate and misleading labelling prevents Canadian consumers from making ethical choices about their purchases. We appreciate the leadership of the LCBO in enabling Ontarians in this regard.

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We encourage the LCBO to continue to respect international law with regard to this particular issue, and to demonstrate its deeply appreciated commitment to social responsibility. We also look forward to the day when justice, peace and security are experienced by Israelis and Palestinians alike, and to the future when Israeli and Palestinian wines — properly labelled — stand side by side in LCBO stores and elsewhere.

Yours sincerely,

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Church in Mission Unit
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Cc The Honourable Jane Philpott,
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