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Activist Coalition to Focus on Canadian Tire and SodaStream in opposing Israeli settlement product sales in Canada

TORONTO, Ontario (April 6, 2014) – A coalition of peace groups are launching an initiative today to ask that Canadian Tire Corporation end its supplier agreement with SodaStream, an Israeli company that manufactures devices and products for making soda drinks at home.

SodaStream’s main factory is located in the Israeli settlement of Ma’ale Adumim, just east of Jerusalem in the West Bank. The International Court of Justice has ruled that Israeli settlements are illegal under the Geneva Conventions.

“Canadian Tire’s own Supplier Code of Business Conduct states that its suppliers must comply with all applicable domestic and international laws,” said Tyler Levitan, staff coordinator with Independent Jewish Voices. “We believe that Canadian Tire is violating its own policies by purchasing and retailing SodaStream products.”

The peace coalition plans to meet with store managers of local Canadian Tire franchisees to discourage them from ordering SodaStream products. They will also encourage shoppers to write to Canadian Tire CEO Stephen Wetmore to request that Canadian Tire stop all its dealings with SodaStream.

SodaStream’s operations in occupied territory came under scrutiny in February when it enlisted actress Scarlett Johansson to be its global brand ambassador. Johansson subsequently resigned from her position as OXFAM’s ambassador and was widely criticized for choosing a lucrative advertising contract over promoting poverty reduction and human rights.

SodaStream has become a popular boycott target of activists in dozens of countries and its own CEO, Daniel Birnbaum has called its Ma’ale Adumim factory “a pain in the ass.” Its share price has plunged since the Scarlett Johansson controversy and financial analysts have warned that its presence in an Israeli settlement presents a risk for investors.

“SodaStream has become a product tainted with human rights violations and illegal occupation,” said Dale Hildebrand, staff coordinator with the United Church network, United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel. “Canadian Tire could be an industry leader by disassociating itself from SodaStream. It’s the right thing to do.”

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