

Israeli Blood Diamond Press Article

Global Palestine Solidarity (GPS), a coalition of Palestine solidarity organisations worldwide has today activated a campaign aimed at increasing public awareness of the extent of Israeli involvement in the blood diamond business. Actions are being staged in Ireland, Australia, Canada, South Africa and Norway with a number of other countries expected to join the campaign within weeks.

The Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC) claims that Irish Jewellers are selling diamonds crafted in Israel to unsuspecting Irish consumers.

The IPSC will be staging events in Dublin and other cities around Ireland to raise public awareness and encourage people to demand certifiably Israeli-Free diamonds in the run-up to Valentine's Day

According to the definition of Conflict or Blood Diamond as set out in the UN's Kimberley Process only rough diamonds come under its control. Excluding trade in the much more valuable polished diamonds from conflict zones ensures that the Israeli diamond business evades its strictures. This sleight-of-hand has to be addressed by the international community by broadening the definition of Conflict Diamonds to include polished diamonds.

Israel claims to be the world's number one exporter of diamonds and in 2005 Israeli gemstone exports were valued at over 16 billion US dollars and comprised 30% of total manufacturing exports. The significance of this figure can be appreciated if one considers that the Israeli Defence Ministry budget in 2007 is less than 12 billion US dollars.

Excluding industrial diamonds, the value of diamond imports to Ireland in 2005 was 7.5 million euro. The failure to introduce a hallmarking system for diamonds has resulted in consumers unwittingly supporting the Israeli economy and Israel's continuing illegal occupation of Palestinian land, ongoing crimes against humanity including the collective punishment of the 1.4 million people trapped in the Gaza strip, genocide, creeping ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and the continued detention of over 10,000 Palestinian prisoners, many without charge, including juveniles and dozens of democratically elected Palestinian lawmakers and ministers.

Although the technology to hallmark diamonds microscopically is readily available, the diamond industry has chosen not to use it; fearing the inevitable consumer backlash at the prospect of wearing Israeli blood diamonds. As one of the GPS campaign slogan says *An Israeli blood diamond is forever...on your conscience.*

The IPSC is critical of the Retail Jewellers of Ireland (RJI) for continuing to purchase diamonds crafted in Israel, the world's most persistent violator of international humanitarian law and over 60 UN resolutions. The IPSC calls on Irish consumers to demand certifiably Israeli-Free diamonds such as laser-inscribed diamonds from other countries. Furthermore, the IPSC calls on the RJI to publish the ethics statement by which, according to its web site, all its members have agreed to abide: otherwise it can only be concluded that the statement in question is a fiction.

This campaign marks the first time that Palestinian solidarity organisations worldwide have

cooperated closely and coordinated their activities to bring maximum public pressure to bear on the Israel state. According to the IPSC spokesperson, the failure of international governments - America and the EU in particular - to reign in the Israeli rogue state has forced civil society worldwide to take action demonstrating its abhorrence of Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people. Israel will have to learn a basic law of physics: for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.