



Att: Adri Nieuwhof  
SAMORA Consultancy

11/6/2006

Dear Ms. Nieuwhof,

I write to express my deep gratitude and support for your efforts to ensure that European companies and financial institutions do not contribute to the Israeli government's continued violations of international law in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) through their involvement in the construction and operation of the Jerusalem Light Rail.

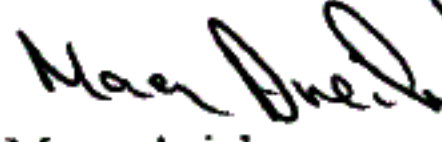
The Jerusalem Light Rail is an Israeli government project designed to link illegal Israeli settlements in the oPt to West Jerusalem through a light rail system. In a first stage, the rail system will directly connect the settlements of Pisgat Ze'ev, Neve Ya'kov and French Hill (total population of approximately 70,000) to West Jerusalem. As part of the project's second stage, the Israeli government plans to connect Ramot, Atarot, Ma'aleh Adumim and East Talpiot – all illegal Israeli settlements located in and around East Jerusalem – to West Jerusalem through the light rail network.

In addition to being in clear violation of international law, the Jerusalem Light Rail will have devastating effects on Palestinian civilian life. Metropolitan East Jerusalem has historically generated approximately 35% of the Palestinian economy, and represents the political, spiritual and cultural center of Palestinian civilian life. The Light Rail will strengthen Israel's settlement project in and around East Jerusalem, thereby suffocating the Palestinian part of the city, further alienating the 250,000 Palestinians resident there and deepening the physical disconnect of Palestinian East Jerusalem from the remainder of the West Bank. Without East Jerusalem, there can be no viable Palestinian state. Therefore, Israeli projects such as the Light Rail undermine the viability of the two-state solution.

By contributing to the development of the light rail project, foreign companies, in violation of international law and of their own domestic foreign policy and laws, lend legitimacy to Israel's illegal annexation of East Jerusalem. When Israel attempted to annex East Jerusalem in 1980, the United Nations Security Council issued Resolution 476, stating that "all... actions taken by Israel... which purport to alter the character and status of... Jerusalem have no legal validity and ... constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East." Indeed, in 2004, the International Court of Justice reaffirmed the Security Council's position and held that third states are required not to recognize or assist the illegal situation. By signing contracts with the Israeli government that strengthen the settlement enterprise in the oPt, European companies provide recognition of Israel's illegal annexation of East Jerusalem, in violation of international law and of their own country's foreign policy and to the detriment of the prospects for peace in the Middle East.

We fully support your efforts to see that companies and other institutions recognize the harm the development of the Jerusalem Light Rail does to the Palestinian population and its right to self-determination. Not only does your initiative show us that there is a vibrant community of conscientious individuals who refuse to let firms and private institutions abroad become complicit in Israel's violations of international law, but it also represents a potentially effective method of international law enforcement in the Palestinian-Israeli context.

With deep gratitude,

  
Maen Ariekat  
Director-General  
Negotiations Affairs Department

