

POSITION STATEMENT ON SOURCING FROM THE WEST BANK

The ongoing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is politically charged, and incredibly complex. Any business sourcing products or services from this region will not be ignorant of this, particularly regarding the issue of sourcing from Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) was established to promote and encourage ethical trade with the aim of improving conditions for workers in global supply chains and their communities. As such, we do not take a stance on issues of national or international politics or matters of foreign policy.

We understand that these settlements are not recognised under international law. However, we also understand that companies are not currently prohibited from sourcing from them. We note that the UK government recently issued guidance to British businesses, warning of the risks of involvement in Israeli settlements in the West Bank (including potential reputational damage). EU law also requires a labelling distinction to be made between goods originating in Israel and those from the occupied territories, so that consumers can make informed choices.

It is for individual companies to determine their own purchasing positions, with reference to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. These place requirements on companies to protect and respect human rights throughout their supply chains and establish robust grievance and remediation processes to deal with any rights violations that may occur. Specifically, we expect our member companies to work with suppliers to uphold the ETI Base Code of labour practice. This enshrines international labour rights principles and is a guide for companies in all supply base decisions. Our foremost concern is that companies respect human rights. Conflict can put pressure on rights and workers may become vulnerable to abuse, so sourcing decisions must give due consideration to this.

We encourage companies to heed government guidance and seek expert advice when considering sourcing from countries or regions with complex political dynamics and conflict. We also encourage companies to seek advice from credible and independent in-country workers' representative groups, including local trade unions and civil society actors.