

## OECD: Approving Israeli illegality?

Israel is expected to be granted membership of the Organisation for European Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the near future, perhaps as early as next month (May 2010).

30 of the richest nations in the world are OECD members. Most of them are European, and include Ireland, but the US, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Australia and Turkey are also members. Membership has no significant economic advantage, but it would confer on Israel additional international legitimacy as a member of an exclusive club of nations – which is why Israel has been seeking membership for nearly 20 years.

Israel's accession to the OECD is set to go ahead even though Israel is in breach of the rules that the OECD applies for the presentation of national statistics - its statistics cover, not just the territory west of the Green Line that is internationally recognised as belonging to Israel, but also the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and the Jewish settlements in the West Bank. The OECD Committee on Statistics has acknowledged the breach, but is nevertheless recommending that Israel be admitted to membership.

This is revealed in a leaked OECD report, titled *Accession of Israel to the Organisation: Draft formal opinion of the Committee on Statistics* [1]. The OECD normally insists that members adhere to the UN-approved standard for the presentation of national accounts, 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA), but the leaked report states plainly that "to the extent that economic activity is measured according to a criterion of nationality, Israel's data is at variance with one of the basic concepts of the SNA" (paragraph 19). The data is at variance because it includes the economic activity of Israeli settlers in the West Bank, but not that of Palestinians.

### Approving illegality

It is scandalous that the OECD is proposing to admit Israel on this basis. Israel is unwilling to conform to the OECD rules for the presentation of national accounts, but nevertheless is being recommended for admission.

That is bad enough. What is worse is that the accounts that the OECD bureaucracy deem acceptable include territory which Israel seized by force in 1967 and which is not recognised internationally as part of Israel. If Israel is allowed into the OECD on that basis, then the existing OECD members (all of whom must approve its admission) will be party to Israel's continuing illegal occupation and colonisation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Syrian Golan Heights.

Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967 amounts to the acquisition of territory by force, which is contrary to the UN Charter. Israel has maintained this annexation in defiance of countless demands from the international community to reverse it, for example, in Security Council resolutions 252, 267, 271, 298, 476 and 478. Likewise, Israel annexed the Golan Heights in 1981 and holds on to it in breach of Security Council resolution 497.

The OECD is happy for Israel to provide accounts that include these illegally acquired territories and also the Jewish settlements on other parts of the West Bank. These are in breach of the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention, which forbids an Occupying Power from transferring its citizens into the territory it occupies. Nevertheless, Israel continues to expand these settlements in defiance of Security Council resolutions 446, 452 and 465 demanding that it cease.

All this illegality will receive the seal of approval of OECD members, if Israel is admitted on this basis – in which case they will have no further grounds to complain about Israel building Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem, because they will have accepted Israel's claim that all of Jerusalem is as much a part of Israel as Tel Aviv.

### OECD fundamental values

In December 2007, the OECD agreed a "roadmap" towards membership [2] with Israel. According to this, the OECD has "fundamental values" to which members must adhere. These include "a commitment to pluralist democracy based on the rule of law and the respect of human rights".

The idea that Israel is a democracy, pluralist or otherwise, is a sick joke. It has ruled over millions of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories since 1967, without according them any democratic rights – only Jewish settlers in the Occupied Territories can vote in Knesset elections. That demonstrates a 40-year record of contempt for democracy rather than a commitment to it and is akin to the voting system that operated in apartheid South Africa.

As for respecting human rights, Israel discriminates systematically against its Arab minority in a variety of ways, and has done so since the foundation of the state. In education, for example, a recent OECD report *Israeli Child Policy and Outcomes* [3] states:

"... government spending per child is much lower in the Arab sector than in the Jewish sector. This financial gap is reflected in different ways: First and most directly, average spending per child in the Arab localities is estimated to be 36.8% lower than in Jewish localities."

In employment, former Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, described the discrimination against Arabs as "deliberate and insufferable" in evidence to a parliamentary commission of inquiry on 11 November 2008 [4]. Clearly, Israel's internal policy towards its Arab minority is not guided by respect for the human rights that is a requirement for becoming an OECD member.

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**April 2010**

### References:

- [1] [cryptome.org/israel-oecd.zip](http://cryptome.org/israel-oecd.zip)
- [2] [www.oilis.oecd.org/olis/2007doc.nsf/LinkTo/NT00004872/\\$FILE/JT03237381.PDF](http://www.oilis.oecd.org/olis/2007doc.nsf/LinkTo/NT00004872/$FILE/JT03237381.PDF)
- [3] [www.oilis.oecd.org/olis/2010doc.nsf/LinkTo/NT00000EBE/\\$FILE/JT03280340.PDF](http://www.oilis.oecd.org/olis/2010doc.nsf/LinkTo/NT00000EBE/$FILE/JT03280340.PDF)
- [4] [www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1036798.html](http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1036798.html)