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Fair trade

WHAT IS FAIR TRADE?

Fair Trade is a growing international movement which ensures that producers in poor countries get a fair deal. It is not about charity – it is about providing opportunities for producers to help themselves and to have more control over their own lives.

Fair trade does this by paying a fair price, maintaining secure contracts, offering support to gain the knowledge and skills that they need, creating opportunities for disadvantaged producers, and sustaining fair working conditions and wages.

These are the fair trade principles:

- ☀ Create opportunities for disadvantaged producers
- ☀ Dealing fairly and respectfully with trading partners
- ☀ Payment of a fair price
- ☀ Safe and healthy working conditions
- ☀ Equality between men and women
- ☀ Protecting the environment
- ☀ Developing producers' independence
- ☀ Long-term secure relationships

Fair trade products usually have the logo of the Fair Trade Federation or Fair Trade Foundation



WHAT IS UNFAIR ABOUT OTHER TRADE?

Powerful countries and large corporations reap bigger and bigger profits, whilst farmers, workers and producers get a poor deal. They are forced to settle for low wages, to work unreasonably long hours, to work in unsafe working conditions, and are forbidden from forming unions which are worker organisations that would enable them to improve their working conditions.



IS FAIR TRADE ENOUGH?

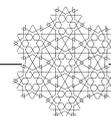
No, fair trade alone isn't enough. Fair trade organisations are also campaigning to fundamentally change the unfair rules and institutions of international trade.

WHY BUY FAIR TRADE? ETHICAL SHOPPING?

Fair trade gives consumers—you— the choice to use their purchasing power to tilt the balance, however slightly, in favour of the poor. It means that when you shop you have a choice to buy something made in conditions that either harm or benefit workers, communities and the environment.

WHY BUY PALESTINIAN FAIR TRADE?

Fair trade is all about promoting products from marginalised producers and ensuring their social, economic and environmental well-being. Producers in the West Bank and Gaza are some of the most marginalised in the world, and their wellbeing is at great risk. Let's see why...



Enduring Occupation—Palestinians under siege

How does occupation strangle an economy?

Closure is a policy, in place since the early 1990s, that imposes severe restrictions of movement on Palestinian people, vehicles and goods in the Palestinian territories. This might not sound so bad, but it means that Palestinians often cannot access work, schools, or hospitals. Apart from the fact that this violates people's human rights and makes any semblance of normal life impossible, it means that an economy cannot function.

The worsening situation of the Palestinian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is not due to natural causes. Rather, it is largely a consequence of measures taken by the Israeli authorities

Amnesty International

The Israeli closure system is a primary cause of poverty and humanitarian crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory, and restricts Palestinian access to health and education services, employment, markets and social and religious networks.

Former UN Secretary General

As a result of all these restrictions, many Palestinians can't reach jobs and often have to travel on foot or long donkey routes. For farmers, this means that they may not be able to reach their fields, and sometimes their crops rot as a result. It also means that it is more expensive to transport goods, which makes the goods more expensive, so people don't buy them.

There have been many instances of products such as fresh produce rotting whilst the Palestinians wait to be allowed through checkpoints. It is sometimes near impossible for them to get their goods to the outside world.

Checkpoints are barriers run by the Israeli army which control the movement of Palestinians. The West Bank is criss-crossed by a web of checkpoints – over 600. Most checkpoints are within the West Bank not between it and Israel, splitting the area into separated islands. To get through the checkpoints you need a permit. The rules for getting permits are complicated and often change without warning – plus having a permit is never a guarantee that you will get through. Apart from this, there are many main roads – covering over 700km – that Palestinians are not allowed to use.

Israeli authorities often "temporarily" seize Palestinian land for "military reasons" and then use it to build permanent structures including settlements and roads for settlers. This confiscated land has not been returned to its owners. Hundreds of thousands of olive trees and other kinds of trees have been uprooted by the Israeli army.

The World Bank describes the Palestinian economy as a "shattered economic space"

Fair trade will not fix the Palestinian economy—only ending the occupation can provide any hope for that. But in the meantime, fair trade can make the difference to people's lives...

It is a huge challenge for fair trade organisations to carry out their work because of the occupation. Curfew and checkpoints slow everything down and make it difficult to do things like to get materials to people, to transport the finished products, to travel to get wages.