



H.E. Laurent Fabius
Minister of Foreign Affairs
French Republic

May 7th, 2015

Dear Minister Fabius,

I wish to draw your attention to a serious issue involving the French enterprise, Orange, of which the French government is a 25 percent shareholder.

In 2011, Orange (formerly France Télécom Orange) renewed a trademark license with its Israeli partner operator, thus becoming Orange Israel.

The French company has become a partner in Israel's occupation of the State of Palestine and a complicit member in Israel's illegal settlement activities through this agreement and the profits reaped as a result. Orange Israel has placed antennae and communication devices in the West Bank on stolen Palestinian land and established Orange stores in illegal West Bank settlements (specifically Ariel Beitara Illit, Modi'in Illit, and Mishor Adumim) and including occupied East Jerusalem. Meanwhile, Palestinian communications operators are unable to place antennae in critical areas or import crucial modern communications equipment.

In addition to these practices, Orange does not pay taxes to the Palestinian government for any of its trade or business activities on Palestinian land or in the Palestinian market. According to a World Bank report, by 2008 this had already resulted in a loss of \$60 million in tax revenues to the Palestinian government.

Further, the company's complicity in the Israeli occupation has manifested in direct support of illegal Israeli military operations, including sponsoring combat units in the 2014 attack on Gaza which left over 2,200 Palestinian civilians dead, more than 500 of whom were children. Launching a campaign Orange dubbed *Adopt a Soldier*, the company boasted that it adopted military operation battalions EZUZ and SHACHAR. EZUZ Tank Battalion participated in the bloodiest human rights atrocities of last summer's onslaught.



It is clear that the French Orange partnership with Orange Israel reinforces illegal Israeli settlements by assisting in encouraging the transfer of its own civilian population into occupied Palestinian territory, while at the same time aiding in the expropriation of private Palestinian land and the forced removal of the Palestinian population therefrom. In doing so, Orange is contributing to Israel's deliberate policy of creating illegal "facts on the ground" intended to block realization of the human right to self-determination and the realization of a just peace between our two States. Such actions are in direct violation of France's duties under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

As a High Contracting Party to this Convention, I respectfully request France to take urgent action to fulfill its obligations to respect and ensure respect for the Convention, including by non-state actors, by insisting that Orange immediately cancel its contractual agreement and cease its involvement with "Orange Israel". I also urge you to issue an advisory to all French companies counseling them not to work with, operate, or provide any services to illegal settlements or their associated infrastructure.

As a state and collective national identity, Palestine can no longer condone Israeli war crimes. We must stand by our principled positions, and we hope France will too.

Sincerely,

Dr. Saeb Erekat

Member of the PLO Executive Committee
Chief Palestinian Negotiator
State of Palestine

