



# Conference of Major Superiors of Men

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March 30, 2016  
Media Release

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## Call for Boycott of Illegal Settlements in Palestine

SILVER SPRING (March 30, 2016). As Catholic men religious leaders in the U.S., we are disciples of Jesus Christ who calls us to offer mercy by entering into chaos to cultivate transformation and healing. The injustice and violence in the Holy Land has gone on for far too long. The Vatican and Pope Francis took steps in June 2014 by bringing Israeli and Palestinian leaders to Rome for prayer and dialogue, as well as later formally [recognizing Palestine](#) as a state. After a recent CMSM visit to the region, key *Catholic religious leaders living in the conflict* identified the need for U.S. Catholic organizations to become more aware of and engaged in the issue of illegal settlements in the occupied territories of Palestine and participate in the efforts to boycott and/or divest from such settlement products/companies.

**Therefore, CMSM is calling on its members and other Catholics to [join](#) the boycott of settlement products and companies profiting from settlements.**

Not a boycott against the people of Israel or against the existence of Israel as a state, this action intends to directly respond to a *call from our Catholic brothers and sisters in the Holy Land* for concrete solidarity in the face of ongoing injustice and violence in this lasting conflict. Yet, it is also a response to the needs of Palestinians, such as land and housing, as well as the needs of Israelis for healthy relationships with their neighbors. This boycott would also join in concert with a long line of other U.S. Christian organizations and churches doing the same as well as follow the support of reputable U.S. Jewish organizations, such as [Americans for Peace Now](#).

International law requires any military occupation to be temporary. The Israeli-Palestinian War began in 1967. The Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits an occupying power from transferring its civilian population to occupied territory and also prohibits from extracting resources from occupied territory.

A recent [Human Rights Watch](#) report finds pervasive and severe human rights violations in the West Bank and calls for businesses to withdraw from settlements. Specific products and companies to boycott: Sodastream, Keter/Black and Decker, Ahava Cosmetics, [Motorola](#), [Hewlett Packard](#), [Caterpillar](#), and the [top 5 Israeli Banks](#).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> More details on Sodastream, Keter/Black and Decker, and Ahava Cosmetics, [see here](#) page 4.

By making a public stance and taking concrete actions, we join with many other organizations working to restrain and stop illegal settlement development. Thus, we hope to cultivate more favorable conditions for a just peace in the conflict.

Our prayers continue to be with all the people in the region and with government leaders to act boldly, to seek justice, and to work as peacemakers. Pope Francis wisely said in prayer to Israeli President Simon Peres and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, “Peacemaking calls for courage, much more so than warfare.”

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The **Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM)** supports and offers resources for U.S. leaders of Catholic men’s religious institutes. CMSM promotes dialogue and collaboration on issues of religious life as well as peace and justice issues with major groups in church and society. There are more than 17,000 religious priests and brothers in the United States.

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