

**Press release from the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine
18th January 2012
For Immediate release**

**"UK universities complicit in illegal occupation":
Activists call for ending of EU funding of settlement activity
Natural History Museum already in the firing line**

A meeting this Friday, entitled "UK universities and Palestinian rights", will hear Palestinian and British activists call for the ending of European Union research funding for a project which they claim is complicit in illegal settlement activity within the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT).

The meeting will take place in one of the universities accused of breaking international law. Students at King's College London have led a highly visible campaign against the university's research collaboration with Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories, the Israeli cosmetics company that operates in an illegal settlement in the OPT.

Ahava DSL has received a total of €1,129M in EU funding from its Framework Programmes (FP) to date. One of its three projects within the current FP7 is NANORETOX, concerned with the reactivity and toxicity of engineered nanoparticles and the risks to the environment and human health. This project has 11 partners, including Imperial College and Kings College London. NANORETOX is coordinated by the Natural History Museum and has a total budget of €302K over 4 years.

A letter in Tuesday's Independent newspaper, signed by 21 prominent academic and cultural figures, called for the Natural History Museum "to take immediate steps to terminate its involvement in Nanorettox".

Professor Jonathan Rosenhead, Chair of the British Committee of the Universities of Palestine (BRICUP) said: "The EU appear to have been bamboozled by the fact that Ahava has its official address in Israel. However, its factory, visitors' centre and laboratory are all situated in Mitzpe Shalem, an illegal settlement inside the West Bank. It is quite clearly in breach of international law, which the EU is supposed to uphold. The fact that the EU is funding such a company is a disgrace. Kings and Imperial should have nothing to do with it if they want to maintain any ethical credibility in the academic world."

Prof. Rosenhead will address Friday's meeting, along with Omar Barghouti who is a founding member of the Palestinian campaign for Academic and Cultural Boycott of Please reply to: BRICUP, BM BRICUP, London WC1N3XX

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Israel (PACBI). The third speaker will be Mehdi Beyad, a student at King's College London student and an activist in KCL Action Palestine. The meeting will be chaired by Maha Rezeq, an independent Palestinian activist and journalist.

"Israeli Apartheid week", to be held in February, will see students and academics across the world preparing to launch similar campaigns against research collaboration with other Israeli companies and institutions that are at the heart of Israel's system of domination over the Palestinian people.

[ends]

Notes to Editors

1. The meeting is called "UK universities and Palestinian rights" and will take place on Friday 20th January from 18.30 to 20.30, in Room K4U.12 of King's College London. (Strand campus - nearest tube is Temple).

Meeting supported by: British Committee for the Universities of Palestine (BRICUP), KCL Action Palestine, LSESU Palestine Society, UCL Friends of Palestine, Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and University of London Union (ULU).

This is an open meeting. Members of the press are invited to attend. Please try to arrive by 6.15.

The meeting is listed on Facebook here:

<http://www.facebook.com/events/197748090320648/>

2. The Palestinian Call for Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel can be read at: <http://pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=869>

3. Detailed information about Ahava and the Nanorettox project involving EU funding is provided on the attached "Nanorettox factsheet" produced by BRICUP.

4. The letter to the Independent is here:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-museum-must-drop-west-bank-link-6290556.html>

An accompanying article in the Independent is here:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/natural-history-museum-attacked-over-links-to-illegal-israeli-company-6290705.html>

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6. Omar Barghouti is an independent Palestinian commentator and human rights activist. He is a member of the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC). He holds Bachelor's and Master's

degrees in electrical engineering from Columbia University, and a Master's degree in philosophy (ethics) from Tel Aviv University.

7. BRICUP's website: www.bricup.org.uk
PACBI's website: www.pacbi.org
PSC's website: www.palestinecampaign.org/