

Israel furious after Norway labels products from occupied territories

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File photo shows a riverside market in Norway.

Oslo, June 13 (RHC)-- Norway has adopted a strict labeling scheme to identify products that come from the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, a move that has infuriated the Tel Aviv regime.

The Norwegian government announced in a statement over the weekend that Israel's agricultural goods coming from the occupied West Bank, East al-Quds, and the Golan Heights must be labeled with their place of origin, citing a 2019 ruling by the European Union's top court requiring products from these areas to be labeled as originating from an "Israeli settlement."

"Foodstuffs originating in areas occupied by Israel must be marked with the area from which the product comes, and that it comes from an Israeli settlement if that is the case," the statement said.

The statement added that "Norway considers the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories to be contrary to international law" -- underlining that the measure mainly concerns imports of olive oil, fruits, vegetables, and potatoes.

The European Commission recommended its member states follow the labeling scheme in 2015, a decision confirmed by the EU's European Court of Justice in 2019.

The Norwegian government said the principle behind the announcement of its decision, as set out in the 2019 ruling, is that consumers should not be deceived by misleading labeling on the origin of the products.

The Israeli regime's foreign ministry censured the move by Norway's government, saying it "will negatively impact bilateral ties between Israel and Norway."

Norway is not an EU member but is part of the European Single Market. It is also part of the European Free Trade Association, a four-country organization that inked a free trade deal with the occupying regime in 1992.

Norway's largest pension fund, the KLP, previously announced that it would no longer invest in 16 companies, including telecom equipment giant, Motorola, over their links to Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank.

The KLP said the companies spanning telecoms, banking, energy, and construction sectors worked against the fund's ethical guidelines, helped facilitate Israel's illegal presence in the occupied Palestinian territories, and therefore risked being complicit in breaches of international law.

Last November, in a similar move Belgium decided to label products made in illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, citing Brussels' desire "to ensure human rights in the West Bank."

Late last month, the EU deplored the Israeli regime's plans for the construction of nearly 4,500 new illegal settler units in the West Bank, calling on Tel Aviv to reverse the decision.

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