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Super Bowl advertiser SodaStream target of interfaith boycott

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Earlier this week, a coalition of Christian, Jewish and Muslim groups launched a boycott campaign against SodaStream, maker of a home-carbonating device and other products that are manufactured at an Israeli settlement in the West Bank.

"These settlements are illegal under international law and are obstacles to peace," reads a petition by the Interfaith Coalition Campaign to Boycott SodaStream. "We choose not to partake in supporting this unethical enterprise and ask consumers and stores to join us."

Announcement of the group's campaign against the Israeli company came days before Sunday's Super Bowl, in which SodaStream won a much-coveted 30-second advertising slot.

The interfaith coalition is just one of a number of groups urging consumers to shun SodaStream for its perpetuation of the Israeli occupation. Commenting on the criticism, SodaStream CEO Daniel Birnbaum said in December, "We don't strengthen or support the occupation. What we're doing is taking a facility in the occupied territory and giving Palestinians a career and economic benefits. I've got to laugh when they think we're on the wrong side of this. We're part of the solution. We build bridges, not walls."

But SodaStream is the subject of a critical report by WhoProfits.org, an Israeli-based research project focused on exposing industries that sustain the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories. SodaStream's primary factories are in Mishor Edomim, an industrial park within Ma'aleh Adumim. The Israeli settlement, a small city I once visited, sprawls across a lower region of the West Bank from Jerusalem to the Jericho Valley.

In its report, WhoProfits.org notes that though Mishor Edomim sits on confiscated Palestinian land, it pays taxes to the Israeli government, not the Palestinian Authority. The industrial park supports the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumin in "various aspects," the report says. " The funds the municipality of the Ma'aleh Adumim settlement collects from SodaStream and the other factories in its industrial zone are used for the construction of roads, education services, sewage treatment, gardening, for the payment of salaries of municipal employees and the like. Thus, when one buys a SodaStream device -- one contributes to sustaining the Ma'aleh Adumim settlement. "

In an unrelated controversy, SodaStream's original Super Bowl ad was pulled for being too in-your-face toward competitors Coke and Pepsi and replaced with a tamer promo. The ban sparked a lot of criticism from the corporate community, and the original ad continues to circulate online.

Meanwhile, the SodaStream boycott campaign has come up with its own anti-occupation ad that you can view here.

For more on the interfaith campaign, go to sodastreamboycott.org.

Advertisement

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