

Brain Freeze? Ben & Jerry's to Boycott West Bank Settlements, East Jerusalem

Ice cream giant Ben & Jerry's announced its plan to boycott West Bank settlements and Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem in a notice posted on its website today, receiving immediate backlash from key Israelis, including current Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and his predecessor, Benjamin Netanyahu.

Ben & Jerry's will end sales of our ice cream in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Read our full statement:

– Ben & Jerry's (@benandjerrys) July 19, 2021

"We believe it is inconsistent with our values for Ben & Jerry's ice cream to be sold in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT," the company, known for taking a stand on issues of social justice, said in its announcement. "We also hear and recognize the concerns shared with us by our fans and trusted partners.

"We have a longstanding partnership with our licensee, who manufactures Ben & Jerry's ice cream in Israel and distributes it in the region. We have been working to change this, and so we have informed our licensee that we will not renew the license agreement when it expires at the end of next year," the company said, adding that it "will stay in Israel through a different arrangement."

The Ben & Jerry's statement used vague language, referencing the "occupied Palestinian territories" without mentioning the words "settlements" or "east Jerusalem," but these seem to be the areas referred to, per the Jerusalem Post.

Bennett was quick to condemn the decision. "There are many ice creams, but only one state of Israel," he said. "Ben & Jerry's decided to label itself as anti-Israel. This is an ethically bereft decision, and I believe that it will come to be one that is wrong from a business standpoint as well.

"The boycotting of Israel—an island democracy surrounded by terror—reflects a complete lack of proportions. The boycott will not work; we will fight it with everything we've got," Bennett concluded.

Netanyahu gave a terser but equally negative response in his tweet:

Now we Israelis know which ice cream NOT to buy

– Benjamin Netanyahu (@netanyahu) July 19, 2021

Other Twitter users also sounded off on the decision, with one saying, "They might as well change their name to Hamas & Adolf's."

I'm an ice cream fan, but I will NEVER buy Ben & Jerry's ice cream again.

They might as well change their name to Hamas & Adolf's.

– Lavern Spicer (@lavern_spicer) July 19, 2021

But the anti-Israel Boycott, Divest and Sanctions Movement applauded Ben and Jerry's decision and called for additional sanctions:

Following years of #BDS campaigns @benandjerrys has announced it will end sales of its ice cream in Israel's illegal settlements on stolen Palestinian land.

We warmly welcome their decision but call on Ben & Jerry's to end all operations in apartheid Israel.#BDSsuccess

– BDS movement (@BDSmovement) July 19, 2021

And satire site *The Babylon Bee* highlighted the announcement in its own sardonic style:

Ben And Jerry's Introduces Fun New Flavor 'Push The Jews Into The Sea Salt And Caramel'

– The Babylon Bee (@TheBabylonBee) July 19, 2021

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