

## **Motion 13**

### **Individual Member Motion – Trading with Israel**

We ask the Board to demonstrate fairness and consistency in its ethical decision-making, and cease all trading with Israel. The Co-op was the first supermarket to boycott Russian products in March 2022, a week after the invasion of Ukraine. Since October 2023, Israel has completely destroyed Gaza and wiped out its key infrastructure - including schools, hospitals and universities. By July 2024, it was estimated that at least 186,000 Gazans – mainly women and children - had died as a result of the bombing, destruction of health facilities, and denial of essential aid (The Lancet 20.7.24). The International Court of Justice has ruled that Israel has a 'plausible case to answer' for genocide and that Israel's laws in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 are 'tantamount to apartheid'. Israel has invaded the sovereign nations of Lebanon and Syria. We urge the Board to show moral courage and leadership, apply the same ethical principles and values it did to Russia, and take all Israeli products off the shelves.

### **Board Response:**

Throughout its history, our Co-op has always sought to align how it does business, including who it trades with, with the values and principles which were first articulated in 1844 and now are shared by co-operatives across the globe.

Our Co-op has always taken decisions based on our values and principles which means that any change in sourcing arrangements should not be specific to one country or geography but should be capable of being applied consistently across different countries where conditions and human rights records do not align with our co-operative values and principles.

Many member-owners have expressed their views on conflicts and human rights, and the action they believe our Co-op should take on their behalf. The Board are currently reviewing our sourcing policies to ensure that they reflect our values and principles and the views of our members, taking into consideration developments in the geopolitical situation and international food supply chains. We intend to confirm any changes to our sourcing policies in the summer, following that review.

The nature of international food supply chains means that it is very often impossible, impractical or unsafe to stop sourcing products entirely from specific countries. For example, the supply chain for many spices means that products from different countries are consolidated many times high up the supply chain before we are able to source them making it impossible to exclude products from certain countries. In order to best serve our customers and members, our Co-op will need to ensure affordability as well as management of sourcing risk, and will therefore need to maintain flexibility within our sourcing and values framework.

Notwithstanding the complex nature of our business, we have taken action where it was possible to do so to ensure how we do business aligns with our values. Following the invasion of Ukraine, we stopped ranging products which were self-evidently from

Russia like Russian Standard Vodka. We did not stop sourcing all products from Russia and would not have been able to do so due to the international food supply chain complexities noted above. In response to a motion brought by our members, we have not sourced products from Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Occupied Territories since 2007.

We do not believe that any of our products contain consolidated ingredients from those settlements but would not be able to confirm that with certainty.

Our Co-op has always advocated for building peace through co-operation and, in considering this motion, members will want to consider the actions we are already taking to put co-operation and co-operatives at the heart of how peace is built in the UK and across the globe through our Hate Divides Communities, Co-operation Builds them campaign. Members should note Council's Motion 9 and the Board's response to that motion.

Any proposed binding motion which would fetter the Board's right and duty to manage the affairs of the Society cannot be validly proposed as an Individual Member motion. As a result, this motion is being proposed to the AGM as an advisory motion, which means that, if it is passed, it will not be binding, but the Board will take the outcome of the vote into account when reviewing existing policies. The Board is keen to hear the views of members on issues put forward by members. The Board is therefore making no recommendation to members as to whether they should support this motion or not.