

Talking Points on Caterpillar's Support for International Law Violations

"This isn't about figures on a balance sheet. It's about families....folks who are losing their jobs and their health care and their homes."

--President Obama, speech at Caterpillar HQ in Peoria, IL



Caterpillar should be building the U.S. Economy, not destroying Palestinian livelihoods

- In a February 12, 2009 speech at the Caterpillar plant in Peoria, IL, President Obama linked the success of Caterpillar to the success of the American economy, arguing that Cat is the company that builds U.S. roads, infrastructure, businesses, and economy
- Caterpillar bulldozers should build in the United States, not destroy in the occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip

Caterpillar bulldozers are weapons

- Caterpillar's D9 model of bulldozer is two stories tall, armored, equipped with a front blade that's more than 6 feet high and 15 feet wide and a "ripper" used to tear through Palestinian homes.
- The Israeli military adds machine-gun mounts, grenade launchers, and bulletproof windows, to "armor-ready" Caterpillar D9s, essentially turning bulldozers into 60 ton tanks
- In 2001, Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz declared that "The D9 is a strategic weapon here." (<http://www.btselem.org/English/Razing/Index.asp>)
- An estimated 4000 Palestinian civilian homes were demolished during "Operation Cast Lead." The Israeli military used unmanned Caterpillar D9s during this operation with so much "success" that they want to add an entirely new battalion of these remote control D9s.

Caterpillar bulldozers are systematically used to violate international law, including the Geneva Conventions and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid

- CAT bulldozers have been used to uproot hundreds of thousands of olive trees, which are the foundation of the Palestinian economy and a symbol of Palestinian culture. Preventing an ethnic group from participation in "in the economic life of the country" is an act of apartheid.
- The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions estimates that 24,145 Palestinian homes have been demolished by the Israeli army in the occupied Palestinian territories since 1967. Many of these demolitions were retribution for attacks on Israelis; collective punishment is a war crime under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Second Additional Protocol.
- Caterpillar equipment has also played a central role in clearing Palestinian agricultural land for the 490 mile long wall Israel is building through the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. The route of the Wall has been declared illegal by a 2004 International Court of Justice advisory ruling.
- CAT bulldozers have been used by the Israeli military to crush civilians to death. Caterpillar victims include a family of 7 Palestinians, a 38-year old paralyzed man, and a pregnant woman who died as their homes were being demolished. Another Cat victim was 23 year old U.S. peace activist Rachel Corrie who attempted to protect a Palestinian home from demolition.

Caterpillar has a responsibility to uphold international law and human rights through its business.

- A recent U.S. District Court ruling allows lawsuits in U.S. courts against multi-national corporations that provided material support to South Africa's apartheid government. The decision specifically included heavy machinery and engine manufacturers such as Fujitsu, Ford, and General Motors. So this ruling could pave the way for similar cases (under something called alien tort claims) against corporations like Caterpillar, that knowingly provide equipment used for violations of international law.
- Institutions including the Church of England and Hampshire College in Massachusetts have already distanced themselves from Caterpillar by divesting of Caterpillar stock. These institutions don't want to be involved in violations of international law and human rights abuses.