



Truck with Maersk container departing from the Achdut Halva Factory in the Ariel Industrial Zone, occupied West Bank, 12 February 2026 (American Friends Service Committee).

BRIEFING EXPOSING MAERSK'S ONGOING SHIPMENTS TO ILLEGAL ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

7 May 2026
Palestinian Youth Movement
www.embargoforpalestine.com



Executive Summary

This briefing exposes new evidence of **Maersk's continued shipments to illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank**, in violation of Denmark's obligations under international law, as well as the company's publicly stated commitments to shift their policy in relation to the transport of goods to and from illegal Israeli settlements on the occupied West Bank, in adherence to UN Guiding Principles and to the OECD guidelines in June 2025.¹

Maersk's policy shift was presented as an effort to strengthen its screening process in line with UN standards. In practice, this should have meant heightened human rights due diligence, stricter screening procedures, and a thorough supply chain review to ensure that products and services did not contribute to Israeli settlements; and should have required adherence to the UN database of businesses involved in settlement activity.

In a 2025 statement to [The New Arab](#), a Maersk spokesperson said that the company's policy shift was specifically related to transport to and from Israeli settlements. However, photographic evidence places Maersk-transported containers at factories in the **Ariel West Industrial Zone** in Ariel, a settlement in the occupied West Bank. Documentation obtained by PYM and Oxfam Denmark indicates that **Maersk coordinated the "door-to-door" transfer** of at least one of these shipments from its origins to a settlement industrial zone.

In response to a request for comment, Maersk confirmed that they transported the shipment to the customer at the port but claimed not to be responsible for the final leg of the journey from port to settlement. Maersk's statement suggests their due diligence processes are not fit-for-purpose. Maersk's responsibility under the applicable international norms requires the company to act with due diligence to prevent or mitigate negative impacts on rights. In this case that means its screening processes should have prevented such a shipment from being handled by Maersk, or at least triggered steps by Maersk to prevent the shipment occurring. Neither seems to have been the case.

Maersk's announcement in 2025 was presented as an effort to strengthen its screening process in line with [UN standards](#). Maersk updated its publicly stated policy after a [report](#) by the Palestinian Youth Movement, published in January 2025, exposed the company's role in transporting products from settlements, including shipments from companies documented in the [UN OHCHR database](#) of businesses involved in activities related to illegal settlements. The report also highlighted shipments for which Maersk facilitated the full, intermodal transport of cargo (door-to-door): i.e. from an illegal settlement, to an Israeli port, and then to the United States.

¹ Maersk's 'Statement on transports related to the Israeli settlements' from June 2025 reads: "Maersk follows international standards for responsible business practices, including the UN Guiding Principles and the OECD guidelines, and at the same time respects local law and regulation. Since the conflict between Israel and Hamas began, and as it has escalated, we have strengthened our screening and compliance measures. Re-assessing our processes is an ongoing priority, and we do so in dialogue with relevant stakeholders. If we identify or become aware of business procedures that conflict with our policies, we respond promptly — by halting the practice, modifying the procedure, or taking other corrective action to align with our commitment to international standards. Following a recent review of transports related to the West Bank, we further strengthened our screening procedures in relation to Israeli settlements, including aligning our screening process with reference to UN standards. We will continue to review our actions to align with the internationally agreed standards for responsible business practices and any applicable law and regulation."

In practice, this new Maersk policy should have included cutting ties with Israeli settlements, in line with the [UN OHCHR database](#) of businesses involved in settlement activity.

These shocking developments require public accountability and immediate rectification. Therefore, Oxfam Denmark and the Palestinian Youth Movement's Mask Off Maersk campaign formally demand the following actions be taken by Maersk and the Danish Government:

- 1. Cease all transport of goods to and from Israeli settlements, in accordance with their publicly stated policy, domestic laws governing the enforcement of complicity in international crimes, and international regulation.**
- 2. Disclose comprehensive measures it will take to prevent future shipments of settlement products.**
- 3. Provide compensation to affected Palestinian communities for harms linked to any transport that has supported illegal settlement enterprise.**
- 4. Their failure to do so may constitute contribution to an internationally wrongful act, and undermines the Danish government's duty to protect international law, as set out in the ICJ Advisory Opinion of July 2024.**
- 5. The Danish government must leverage all available regulatory and legal mechanisms, including formal investigations, to ensure Maersk's operations align strictly with Denmark's international obligations.**

Evidence of Continued Shipments to Settlements

Photos taken by the American Friends Service Committee and obtained by the Palestinian Youth Movement show Maersk containers at factories in the Ariel Industrial Zone, located in the Ariel, a settlement in the occupied West Bank on February 12th, 2026 at about 11 AM. Below are two photos of containers at the Achdut Factory for Tahini Halva and Sweets (**Figure 1** and **Figure 2**).



Figure 1. Truck departing from the Achdut Halva Factory with a Maersk container (32° 5' 33.19" N, 35° 7' 28.71" E).



Figure 2. The same truck in Figure 1, showing Maersk container number MRKU8974366 and Hamburg Sud container HASU1188964 at the Achdut Halva Factory (32° 5' 32.13" N, 35° 7' 28.11" E)

Figure 2 clearly displays container numbers MRKU8974366 and HASU1188964, making the shipment easily traceable. Shipping documents obtained by the Palestinian Youth Movement tie these containers to **Maersk bill of lading 262728510** and reveal the following details:

- **Goods description:** "S.T.C 380 ETHIOPIAN ORIGIN WHITISH HUMERA TYPE SESAME SEEDS, 2025/26 CROP YEAR QUANTITY: 228 MT TOTAL: 4560 BAGS GROSS WEIGHT: 228,456 KGS NET WEIGHT: 228,000 KGS PACKING: IN NEW EXPORT WORTHY P.P. BAGS OF 50 KGS"
- **Declared weight:** 228,456 kg
- **Route:** Djibouti → Salalah → Port Said East → Ashdod
- **Type of Treatment:** Door-to-door
- **Receiver:** Gilron Customs & Forwarding
- **Receiver Type:** Customs agent
- **Containers:** 12 twenty-foot containers, each with a declared weight of 19,038 kg.
- **Document reporter:** Maersk Israel Ltd.

An analysis of Ethiopian export data,² derived from bills of lading, reveals multiple similar shipments of sesame seeds to the Achdut Factory between November 2025 and March 2026 which explicitly list the factory as the consignee and the company's office address "36 AHARON BOXER NES ZIONA" or a PO box at a nearby illegal settlement address "P.O. B79, Industrial Area Barkan." The obtained bills of lading did not include bill of lading numbers or vessel data, and thus none of the shipments could be tied to this particular bill of lading. Still, they reveal that previous shipments to this factory explicitly mention illegal settlements in the consignee address, rather than an obscure third party.

The documentation related to this particular shipment, produced by Maersk's Israel subsidiary, reveals that **Maersk coordinated the full door-to-door transport of a large shipment**. Although the receiver is a freight forwarder with offices in Ashdod and Haifa, the documentation indicates that the freight forwarder only operated as a customs agent.

The photo evidence and cargo documents indicate that Maersk coordinated the shipment of these 12 containers directly to the door of the factory inside the settlement. Maersk has indicated that this not the case, claiming only that the shipment was arranged to Ashdod port. Maersk has declined to release information that would enable the verification of who, if not Maersk, made arrangements for the final leg of the shipment from Ashdod port to the settlement. Maersk has previously transported shipments to illegal settlements where the consignee address on the bill of lading listed an illegal settlement, including the Barkan Industrial Zone.³

² Please see Appendix

³ "[Maersk's Role in Facilitating Exports From Illegal Israeli Settlements to the U.S.](#)", Palestinian Youth Movement (22 January 2025).

Background on the Achdut Factory for Tahini Halva and Sweets (Achdut-Achva)

Achdut-Achva is a private Israeli food manufacturer specializing in sesame products, and it is deeply tied to Israel's settlement project. The company's primary production facilities are located in the Ariel West Industrial Zone in the Ariel settlement, built on the lands of the Palestinian village of Salfit. According to the independent research center Who Profits, the company received [millions](#) of NIS of Israeli shekels (NIS) in indemnifications from the Israeli Ministry of Economy and Industry under the budget line for the "indemnification of exporters from Judea and Samaria [West Bank] and the Golan." In total, the identified payments amounted to NIS 2,878,650, roughly USD 872,000, including NIS 1,579,363 from 2011 to 2017, NIS 713,824 in 2020, NIS 496,450 in 2021, and NIS 89,013 in 2022. These payments demonstrate the close relationship between the company and the Israeli settler project.

According to a 2021 company [presentation](#), the company is a "leading exporter amongst health & ethnic markets all over the world" with clients in the "U.S.A., Canada, GB, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Brazil, Venezuela, Australia, South Africa, and many more." Additionally, the company relies on imports for its sesame seeds, its most critical staple ingredient. The company [website](#) describes high-quality sesame seeds as the secret to their products and mentions that they import sesame seeds "from Ethiopia directly from a region named Humera, which is known by its sweet and delicacies seeds."

The company relies on international trade to maintain its operations on illegally occupied land by importing raw material and exporting products. Transporting 12 containers with 228,000 kilograms of sesame seeds to a factory producing sesame products is not insignificant, especially since the company relies on these particular Ethiopian seed imports and advertises their high quality for their exports.

Impact of settlement trade on Palestinian communities

Israel's illegal settlements and the trade linked to them cause deep economic, social, and environmental harm to Palestinian communities. [UNCTAD](#) estimates that by the end of 2024, the Palestinian economy had fallen back to 2010 levels, erasing more than two decades of economic progress, while the [economic value](#) extracted by Israel from settlement areas in East Jerusalem and the West Bank between 2000 and 2024 exceeded \$832 billion. At the same time, settlement-linked businesses continue to benefit from major international support, including from [1,115 European financial institutions](#) with financial ties to companies involved in illegal settlements.

Ariel settlement and the nearby Barkan Industrial Park show these impacts clearly. Built in the heart of Palestinian Salfit district, Ariel has long obstructed the growth of Salfit and surrounding Palestinian communities, and new expansion plans risk further isolating the

area. Barkan, established on [illegally confiscated Palestinian land](#), has fragmented nearby villages, restricted movement and economic activity, and pushed many Palestinians into exploitative settlement work under discriminatory and unsafe conditions. It has been documented that Palestinian workers at Barkan Industrial Park are paid far below minimum wage, denied benefits, and subjected to extremely long shifts. The area has also suffered [serious environmental harm](#), with chemical waste from Barkan reportedly dumped onto nearby villages leading to serious conditions such as organ failure and cancer. Despite this, settlement goods continue to be exported at scale to international markets, including Europe.

Conclusion: Maersk still profits from illegal settlements

This investigation found clear evidence that Maersk has continued to facilitate trade with illegal Israeli settlements. The shipment exposes the ineffectiveness of Maersk's own due diligence practices and the failure of the Danish government to ensure respect for its international obligations by companies within its jurisdiction. Despite claims that it strengthened its human rights due diligence policies and practices, Maersk continues to do business with companies based in Israeli settlements, including by facilitating large shipments to those settlements.

From the evidence (manifest, photos, trade data, dialogue with Maersk), we can conclude that Maersk is directly linked through a business relationship to settlement activity that is unlawful under international law and violates Palestinian human rights. Under the relevant international standards for responsible business (UNGPs, OECD Guidelines), which Maersk itself claims to adhere to, being 'directly linked' to a negative impact on rights triggers a duty to act with due diligence to prevent or mitigate those negative impacts. Failing to do so can, over time, increase the risk to Maersk of legal liability for involvement in human rights abuses that rise to the level of international crimes. In doing so, **Maersk actively normalizes and contributes to the economy of occupation**, therefore undermining Denmark's duties of non-recognition and non-assistance in respect of an unlawful situation under general international law.

This shipment coincides with the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in the West Bank, including accelerated [land theft and annexation](#) across the occupied West Bank. This illegal expansion includes the E1 plan, which aims to [expand](#) the illegal settlement of Ma'ale Adumim and effectively [sever](#) East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. In 2025 alone, at least 32,000 Palestinians across the West Bank were [displaced](#) as a result of Israel's escalated military raids, and settlers carried out more than 1,800 [attacks](#) across 280 communities. During these attacks, settlers and Israeli forces killed 240 Palestinians, including 55 children, and injured 1,190. Additionally, these shipments come at a time when Israeli officials call for the settlement of Gaza. In December 2025, Defense Minister Israel Katz revealed [plans](#) for the establishment of illegal settlements in northern Gaza at a ceremony within the illegal settlement of Bet El in the occupied West Bank, and in February 2026, Israeli settlers, led by MP Limor Son Har-Melech, [invaded](#) Gaza and planted trees to mark their first step towards

Jewish-only settlements. On the 24th of March of 2026, Defense Minister Katz [stated](#) that Israel will occupy southern Lebanon up to the Litani River.

Maersk's engagement in the supply chain of settlement goods is an active facilitation of Israel's illegal occupation and settlement enterprise, which contributes dispossession of Palestinians, whom are facing a targeted campaign of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Maersk is aware of its obligations to uphold human rights and ethical business conduct, as evidenced by its June 2025 statement. However, this investigation clearly shows that Maersk is failing to meet those obligations.

This brief serves as a call to action to Maersk to truly adopt and disclose necessary human rights due diligence processes and to bring their procedures in line with international law, including the recognized norms for responsible business. The Danish government should also uphold its duties of non-recognition of, and non-assistance to Israel's illegal settlements. In addition, Danish authorities should be aware that the continued failure of Maersk to conduct its business in a manner that respects the rights of Palestinians increases the risk of liability for Maersk under laws governing the enforcement of complicity in international crimes.

Appendix

| Date | Product Description | Shipper Name | Gross Weight | Net Weight | Consignee Address |
|-----------|---|---|--------------|------------|---|
| 18-Mar-26 | ETHIOPIAN ORIGIN WHITISH SESAME SEEDS HUMERA TYPE | NILE SOURCE PLC | 190,361.00 | 190,000.00 | 36 AHARON BOXER NES ZIONA |
| 13-Mar-26 | ETHIOPIAN ORIGIN WHITISH SESAME SEEDS HUMERA TYPE | AMBAYE GENERAL TRADING PRIVATE LIMITED COMPANY | 190,361.00 | 190,000.00 | NA |
| 26-Feb-26 | ETHIOPIAN SESAME SEEDS | SHASHO KELBESA OLJIRA | 190,380.00 | 190,000.00 | NA |
| 18-Feb-26 | ETHIOPIAN ORIGIN WHITISH HUMERA TYPE SESAME SEEDS 2025/2026 CROP YEAR | NEFAS SILK PAINTS FACTORY PLC | 190,380.00 | 190,000.00 | NA |
| 16-Feb-26 | ETHIOPIAN ORIGIN WHITISH SESAME SEEDS HUMERA TYPE | NILE SOURCE PLC | 190,361.00 | 190,000.00 | 36 AHARON BOXER NES ZIONA |
| 13-Feb-26 | ETHIOPIAN ORIGIN WHITISH SESAME SEEDS HUMERA TYPE | AMBAYE GENERAL TRADING PRIVATE LIMITED COMPANY | 190,361.00 | 190,000.00 | P. O.B. 36 AHARON BOXER STREET, NESS ZIONA |
| 11-Feb-26 | ETHIOPIAN ORIGIN WHITISH HUMERA TYPE SESAME SEEDS,2025/26 CROP YEAR | NEFAS SILK PAINTS FACTORY PLC | 190,380.00 | 190,000.00 | P.O. B79, Industrial Area Barkan |

| Date | Product Description | Shipper Name | Gross Weight | Net Weight | Consignee Address |
|-----------|---|--|--------------|------------|--|
| 30-Jan-26 | ETHIOPIAN ORIGIN WHITISH SESAME SEEDS HUMERA TYPE | NILE SOURCE PLC | 190,361.00 | 190,000.00 | 36 AHARON BOXER NES ZIONA |
| 24-Jan-26 | ETHIOPIAN ORIGIN WHITISH HUMERA TYPE SESAME SEEDS 2025/26 CROP YEAR | NEFAS SILK PAINTS FACTORY PLC | 190,380.00 | 190,000.00 | NA |
| 17-Jan-26 | ETHIOPIAN ORIGIN WHITISH SESAME SEEDS HUMERA TYPE | NILE SOURCE PLC | 190,361.00 | 190,000.00 | 36 AHARON BOXER NES ZIONA |
| 16-Jan-26 | ETHIOPIAN ORIGIN WHITISH SESAME SEEDS HUMERA TYPE | AMBAYE GENERAL TRADING PRIVATE LIMITED COMPANY | 190,361.00 | 190,000.00 | P. O.B. 36 AHARON BOXER STREET, NESS ZIONA |
| 16-Jan-26 | ETHIOPIAN WHITISH SESAME SEEDS HUMERA TYPE, 2025/26 CROP YEAR. | BETELHEM BEKELE AYELE | 152,304.00 | 152,000.00 | NA |
| 12-Dec-25 | ETHIOPIAN ORIGIN WHITISH SESAME SEEDS HUMERA TYPE | AMBAYE GENERAL TRADING PRIVATE LIMITED COMPANY | 190,361.00 | 190,000.00 | P. O.B. 36 AHARON BOXER STREET, NESS ZIONA |
| 17-Nov-25 | ETHIOPIAN ORIGIN WHITISH HUMERA TYPE ORGANIC SESAME | GETASEW AYALEW WASIHUN | 0 | 228,000.00 | P.O. B79, Industrial Area Barkan |

Table 1. Shipments of Sesame Seeds from Ethiopia to “Achdut Factory for Tahini, Halva, and Sweets Ltd” in Israel from November 2025 to March 2026.

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Research compiled by the
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The **Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM)** is a transnational, independent, grassroots movement of Palestinian and Arab youth struggling for the liberation of our homeland

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