

Mr. Curt Goering  
Chief Operating Officer  
Amnesty International USA  
5 Penn Plaza  
New York, NY 10001

Ramallah, 20 October 2011

Dear Mr. Goering,

As non-governmental organisations dedicated to the promotion of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), we the undersigned organisations, are writing to voice our concerns regarding Amnesty International USA's investment, through TIAA-CREFF, of AI USA employee retirement funds in companies that facilitate Israel's human rights violations. Such companies include:

- [Eblit Systems](#), which provides surveillance systems for the Wall, declared illegal by the [International Court of Justice](#) in 2004;
- [Caterpillar](#), whose machinery has also been involved in the construction of the Wall, [illegal](#) settlements, military incursions and the [demolition](#) of Palestinian homes;
- [Motorola Solutions](#), which, according to Who Profits, provides surveillance services to settlements in the form of virtual fences and radar stations, erected in some cases on private Palestinian land;
- [Veolia](#), which provides transport to the settlements and uses occupied land and resources to supply products and services to the settlements; and
- [Northrop Grumman](#), one of the world's largest arms manufacturers, which produces parts for the Apache AH64D and Longbow Helicopters, radars for F16's, and Longbow Hellfire 2 missiles, [used](#) in attacks on Gaza during Operation Cast Lead in December 2008 – January 2009.

Four out of five of these companies profit from settlements, [illegal under international law](#), as repeatedly pointed out by Amnesty International itself. On 22 February 2011, for example, Amnesty International [stated](#): “Israel’s policy of settling its civilians on occupied land violates the Fourth Geneva Convention, and is considered a war crime according to the statute of the International Criminal Court. Israel’s settlement policy is also inherently discriminatory and results in continuing violations of the rights to adequate housing, water and livelihoods for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, as Amnesty International has repeatedly documented.”

Regarding Caterpillar, as recently as 2011, Amnesty International USA [stated](#): “CAT equipment has been used to [uproot olive trees](#) and destroy other [agricultural products and land](#). During

‘Operation Cast Lead’ in the Gaza Strip two years ago, Israel used armored [D9 bulldozers](#) to demolish wide swathes of homes, factories, agricultural land and civilian infrastructure, including [water pipes and networks](#) needed for basic survival.[...] CAT’s role in human rights violations in the OPT continues to be relevant.”

Northrop Grumman's production of [parts for aircraft](#) directly contributed to civilian deaths during Operation Cast Lead, in which 1,172 civilians were killed, including [352 children](#). In 2009, [Amnesty International reported](#): “Aerial bombardments launched from Israeli F-16 combat aircraft targeted and destroyed civilian homes without warning, killing and injuring scores of their inhabitants, often while they slept. Children playing on the roofs of their homes or in the street and other civilians going about their daily business, as well as medical staff attending the wounded were killed in broad daylight by Hellfire and other highly accurate missiles launched from helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), or drones, and by precision projectiles fired from tanks.”

The involvement of TIAA-CREFF in companies that sustain Israeli settlements and the Wall in the OPT, provide equipment for the demolition of Palestinian homes, and produce weapons responsible for civilian deaths during 'Operation Cast Lead' is in direct conflict with Amnesty International's policy on these issues. According to rights group Jewish Voice for Peace, when approached about their involvement in these companies, TIAA-CREFF [stated](#): “Our responsibility is to earn a competitive financial return on the retirement savings entrusted to us by 3.7 million participants obliges us to invest in a diverse line-up of companies across all sectors of the global economy. The holdings at issue comply fully with U.S. Law.”

Amnesty International USA has a well established reputation for its [commitment](#) to “prevent corporate human rights abuses or to hold companies to account.” Amnesty has further affirmed that “all companies, no matter where they are, have a direct responsibility to respect human rights in their own operations.” That Amnesty International USA should be involved in a company that has investments in Eblit Systems, Veolia, Motorola Solutions, Caterpillar and Northrop Grumman affects the credibility of your work in human rights. For this reason, we are confident that Amnesty International USA will take steps to ensure that they provide retirement fund options that are not financing companies that participate in the very human rights violations that Amnesty International condemns.

Thanking you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Addameer Prisoners' Support and Human Rights Association

Al Dameer Association for Human Rights

Al-Haq

Al-Mezan Centre for Human Rights

Badil Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights

Defence for Children International – Palestine Section

Ensan Centre for Democracy and Human Rights

Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Centre

Ramallah Centre for Human Rights Studies

Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling