

Dexia Bank and Belgian Government Finance Illegal Israeli Settlements in Occupied Palestine

UN Special Rapporteur Richard Falk rebukes Dexia Bank and Belgian Government

By [Global Research News](#)

Global Research, October 22, 2013

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by Mario Franssen, Intal spokesperson

Richard Falk, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied since 1967, describes in his report to the UN General Assembly that the Belgian government can be held responsible for the funding by Dexia Bank of illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.

For the second consecutive year, Richard Falk has examined the politics of Dexia Bank in the occupied Palestinian territories, through its subsidiary Dexia Israel. In his report submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations on October 29, 2013, he is quite harsh for the Belgian government.

The Belgian government is the majority shareholder of Dexia Bank with 50,02 % of the shares. Dexia Bank in turn is 66 % owner of Dexia Israel. In his report Mr. Falk makes very clear that this can have serious consequences.

The Belgian government under fire

The Special Rapporteur sees at least five elements that can put the Belgian government in an awkward position:

1. Since Belgium has signed the Geneva Conventions, and Dexia Israel violates Article 49 (p 6) of these conventions, Belgium fails in its duty to enforce these agreements (p.15 of the report)
2. The Special Rapporteur states that Dexia Israel violates Human Rights. Because the Belgian government is majority shareholder, Belgium must take the necessary steps to prevent these activities and / or punish those responsible within Dexia Israel (p. 15-16)
3. Richard Falk also criticizes Dexia because it has withdrawn from the *Global Compact*, a self-regulatory instrument within the United Nations of which Dexia Bank was a member. This is especially surprising because Dexia Bank withdrew in April 2013, after the Belgian government became the majority shareholder (p. 16)

4. International Criminal Law is applicable according to Mr. Falk. Belgium is a signatory of the Rome Statute. Thus Belgian citizens fall under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. The ICC could investigate whether Dexia staff is involved in war crimes. (p. 16-17)

5. The Belgian State can be held responsible for the damage caused by its bank, Dexia. Possibly this may lead to the payment of damages and reparations. (p. 17)

Finally Mr. Falk criticizes the Belgian government in the conclusions (p. 23-24) and calls on the Belgian NGO's and human rights organisations to continue to put pressure on the Belgian government to end its involvement in the illegal colonization of the occupied Palestinian territories.

* Read the full report of the Special Rapporteur: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/third/68/documentslist.shtml>

[A/68/376](#) [F] [S] [A] [C] [R] *Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967*

Richard Falk welcomes Dutch firm's decision to pull out of an illegal Israeli project in East Jerusalem

On the same day, Richard Falk welcomed the decision made by the Dutch multinational company Royal HaskoningDHV to terminate its contract with the Jerusalem municipality to build the Kidron wastewater treatment plant intended to service illegal Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem.

"The sewage treatment facility would have served to further entrench Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem, now universally considered to be a violation of international law and United Nations resolutions," said the independent expert charged by the UN Human Rights Council to monitor and report on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

"It is encouraging that international corporations are taking corporate social responsibility seriously and weighing the legal consequences, financial costs and reputational risks of involvement in the maintenance and expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine," he noted.

In its official statement, Holland's largest engineering company, Royal HaskoningDHV, explained that *'In the course of the project, and after due consultation with various stakeholders, the company came to understand that future involvement in the project could be in violation of international law.'* Special Rapporteur Falk praised the decision as a major acknowledgement of the arguments made by legal experts and human rights activists about the corporate responsibility to respect human rights.

"The Dutch firm's decision is part of a growing momentum against Israel's failure to comply with international law in accordance with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention governing belligerent occupation," added the UN expert, citing the recent report of the international fact finding mission on Israeli settlements.

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<http://www.intal.be/nl/article/dexia-en-belgische-overheid-opnieuw-onder-vuur-de-algemene-vergadering-van-de-vn> - Translation from Dutch: Dirk Adriaensens

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