

**PURCHASE PALESTINIAN OLIVE OIL**  
**TO SUPPORT PEACE WITH JUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

Olive oil can be purchased for \$18 for a 750ml bottle.

Sponsored by,

**The Kahal B'raira Middle East Working Group (KBMEWG)**

To purchase, please send email to

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**WHY IS BUYING THIS OLIVE OIL IMPORTANT?**

The olive branch is a universally recognized symbol of peace, and, since ancient times, the olive tree has held deep significance in the culture and economy of Israel/Palestine. Olive oil is the backbone of the Palestinian agricultural economy. Eighty percent of cultivated land in Palestine is planted with olive trees, and the olive harvest provides between 25 – 50 percent of a farming family's annual income. As the political and economic situation in Palestine continues to deteriorate, olive oil has become a matter of basic survival for many Palestinian families. Many Palestinians have lost jobs in Israel, while others can no longer access workplaces in neighboring villages and cities within the West Bank as a result of checkpoints, road closures and curfews. Buying this oil is a constructive and tangible way to help alleviate poverty and build peace. The KBMEWG has developed a personal relationship with the olive growers in Jayyus, a farming community near Tulkarim in the West Bank. For the last several years we have annually supported their farms with olive tree saplings during the planting season.

**WHERE DOES THE OIL COME FROM?**

Founded in 1983 by Palestinian agronomists working on a voluntary basis in response to deterioration in agricultural programs and services as a result of Israeli occupation, PARC [Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees] offered expert advice to marginalized and poor farmers. A non-profit, non-governmental organization in the West Bank, PARC continues to be committed to sustainable development in rural Palestine. It assists at every stage of the olive oil production process, from helping farmers to reclaim rocky land, conserve water, and implement sustainable environmental practices (like re-cropping, dry-land recycling of waste materials), to setting up regional labs for farmers to test their olive oil. PARC works with 15 different small farming communities.

Olive Branch Olive Oil is extra-virgin and comes in 750 ml (25 ounce) green glass bottles, purposely stored in a manner that keeps light and heat at a minimum. Produced from the first pressing of

the olives, this oil contains no more than 0.8% acidity, There can be no refined oil in extra-virgin olive oil. Palestinian farmers traditionally care for their trees without the use of pesticides or sprays.

## **WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?**

Olive Branch Olive Oil is an outgrowth of a 2003 effort by Middle East peace activists in the Boston area to support Palestinian farmers. Since then, it has evolved into an ongoing volunteer project to create a U.S. market for Palestinian olive oil. The goal is to make a tangible difference in the lives of the farmers and their families. Any funds raised above and beyond the cost of the oil, import fees, and administrative and marketing costs, are re-invested in purchasing more oil. Out of that amount, 15% is donated directly to peace and justice projects in Palestine. In the past, Olive Branch Olive Oil has contributed to numerous groups including the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, the American Near East Refugee Aid, Birthright Unplugged, American Friends Service Committee – Middle East Crisis Fund, and Grassroots International.

In addition to supporting PARC more generally, the KBMEWG has a personal relationship with the farmers of Jayyus, a village in the north near Tulkarim. Members of KBMEWG have visited twice in recent years and sent annual contributions to support the purchase of new olive tree saplings. Additional money raised by the sale of this oil has supported dual-language/culture schools in Israel and the West Bank, and the Barenboim-Said *West-Eastern Divan Orchestra*, as well as *Breaking the Silence*, *Combatants for Peace*, and other collaborative Palestinian-Israeli efforts to end the occupation. In addition, the KBMEWG will donate \$5.50 from the sale of each bottle to support groups in both the United States and Israel/Palestine that are working towards peace with justice in the Region. This year we have already supported The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra begun by Daniel Barenboim, conductor, and Edward Said, academic and advocate for Palestinian rights (See video: *Knowledge is the Beginning*) and the Jayyus (West Bank, Palestine) Farming Community. In addition, we hope to support work done in both this country and in the Region by *Artsbridge* (see website: <http://www.artsbridgeonline.com/> ).