



Press Release

## Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem: 3 French companies involved in light-rail construction

**Paris, 13 June 2018** – At a time when the French government has publicly opposed the US decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, several organizations<sup>1</sup> have published a report today highlighting the participation of three French companies – EGIS and SYSTRA, subsidiaries of public institutions (SNCF and RATP; *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations*<sup>2</sup>), and ALSTOM – in the construction of the Jerusalem tramway. This symbolic construction, a tool of Israeli settlement and annexation policy, aims to connect West Jerusalem to the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory of East Jerusalem, in blatant violation of international law, via the extension of an existing line and the creation of two new lines, all with the settlements as their endpoints.

East Jerusalem's occupation and "annexation" by the State of Israel violate international law, as recalled by numerous resolutions of the UN Security Council (in particular, [no. 478 of 1980](#) and [no. 2334 of 2016](#)).

**Three French companies, including two with a significant public sector majority share, are participating in the rollout of this project:**

- EGIS RAIL, a branch of the EGIS group and 75% share subsidiary of *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations*
- SYSTRA, a joint subsidiary of SNCF and RATP, each holding 42% of its capital.

These two engineering companies are actively participating in the research surrounding these new tramway lines and in coordinating the various entities in charge of their rollout.

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> company is ALSTOM, already a major player in the first phase of the tramway's construction; it has already responded to calls for tenders for the second phase.

*"The involvement of these two subsidiaries of public companies and Alstom is all the more scandalous given that these companies are subject to the French due diligence law and that they all committed to respecting human rights when they signed the "United Nations Global Compact". These texts are not optional; their signatories are required never to be complicit in flagrant violations of international law!"* stated Maryse Artiguelong, Vice-President of the Human Rights League and the FIDH (International Federation of Human Rights).

**The French government is doubly liable :**

- **Under the international law obligation "to protect against human rights violations by third parties", i.e. the concerned companies;**

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<sup>1</sup> Association France Palestine Solidarité, Cfdt, CGT, FIDH, Al-Haq, LDH, Solidaires, Plateforme des ONG françaises pour la Palestine

<sup>2</sup> French public sector financial institution



- **As trustee of the 3 public institutions that are majority shareholders in the two companies concerned.**

"What are we to make of the French government's inaction in the face of public sector entities participating in Israeli settlement activity, which is completely illegal, and which, incidentally, the French government has repeatedly condemned? It's time to shift from words to action," said Bertrand Heilbronn, President of the France Palestine Solidarity Association (AFPS).

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