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Artists and Occupied Regions Policy

Standing for artistic freedom, cultural inclusion, non-discrimination and ethical awareness

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Table of Contents

1. **Introduction**
2. **Purpose**
3. **Guiding Principles**
4. **Acceptable Practices**
5. **Unacceptable Practices**
6. **Due Diligence**
7. **Review and Accountability**

Appendices

- Appendix A: How we decide?
- Appendix B: Definitions
- Appendix C: Examples
- Appendix D: Possible example of a show contract clause
- Appendix E: FAQs

1. Introduction

At Midnight Mango, our artists and our agents come from many different countries. We believe that our collective musical culture transcends borders and is more powerful for it. We can become better people through experiencing and appreciating music from places we are not from.

This policy specifically addresses how we represent artists connected to regions affected by occupation. It covers both artists from occupied communities and those from occupying communities who reject oppression. Our approach is guided by international law, ethical awareness, and a responsibility to act with fairness and respect.

We work with artists from all backgrounds, and our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) applies everywhere, however this policy focusses on the inequality and illegality of occupation. Please see our EDI Manifesto for our universal position how we expect people to be treated based on their own characteristics.

2. Purpose

Midnight Mango Ltd is committed to representing artists with fairness, respect, and awareness of global inequalities. This policy outlines our approach to working with artists from regions affected by

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occupation. It applies to artists from both occupied communities and those from occupying communities who reject oppression and act independently of oppressive systems.

For the purposes of this policy, an occupied region is defined according to international humanitarian law as territory under the effective control of a foreign power without the consent of its legitimate sovereign authority. Where such occupation has been declared illegal by the United Nations or recognised as unlawful under international law, Midnight Mango will apply heightened due diligence. See appendix A.

Countries engaged in active war or large-scale armed conflict fall outside the scope of this policy. See appendix A.

As a UK-based agency, we acknowledge the United Kingdom's historical role as a colonial power and the lasting impact of colonialism on global cultural dynamics. The UK continues to play a role politically, economically, and diplomatically in supporting or enabling regimes and systems that perpetuate inequality and oppression.

This awareness informs our commitment to ethical representation, cultural inclusion, and solidarity with artists navigating these legacies. Our aim is to ensure our work reflects our values of artistic freedom, cultural inclusion, non-discrimination, and ethical awareness.

3. Guiding Principles

We believe in:

- Artistic Freedom – All people deserve the opportunity to express themselves freely and share their work with the world.
- Cultural Inclusion – All people have fundamental cultural rights, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or political context.
- Non-Discrimination – All people deserve to live free from discrimination that are based on their national identity or on the political situation in their homeland.
- Ethical Awareness – All people should remain mindful of the political and ethical implications of artistic work and avoid complicity in oppression.

4. Acceptable Practices

We may represent artists when:

- Their work is independent of occupying regimes.
- Their beliefs, statements, actions, funding and affiliations are transparent and broadly in-line with our guiding principles.
- Our partnerships with the artist's wider team; promoters and venues uphold the guiding principles as described above.

5. Unacceptable Practices

We will not represent artists from an occupying region:

- That support the occupation of occupying regimes.
- That do not acknowledge the abuses of the occupying regime.
- Misrepresent, suppress, or whitewash their artistic identity.
- Are funded or endorsed by the occupying regimes.
- That use art to promote hate, disinformation, or dehumanisation.

- That engage in artwashing, i.e. using art to distract from or legitimise unethical practices.

6. Due Diligence

Before entering representation agreements with artists from the region, we will:

- Research the artist's background, funding sources, and affiliations.
- Consult with the artist about how their identity should be presented.
- Where uncertainty exists, we will seek independent advice before making a final decision.

7. Review and Accountability

All employees of Midnight Mango Ltd will read, acknowledge and have access to this policy. The policy will be reviewed annually and updated in the light of global developments or new ethical challenges. Concerns or reports of potential breaches may be raised confidentially with the Midnight Mango leadership.

END – Appendices below

APPENDICES

Appendix A: How we decide?

Midnight Mango Ltd will assess whether a region is occupied or illegally occupying using the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** and **UN resolutions**, which rely on **Article 42 of the 1907 Hague Regulations** and the **Fourth Geneva Convention**. This link is particularly helpful in our decision process <https://www.icrc.org/en/article/occupation-international-humanitarian-law-questions>

At the time of writing this includes, but is not limited to:

List of Territories Declared Illegally Occupied

Based on **UN resolutions** and **ICJ advisory opinions**:

1. **Palestinian Territories** (West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza) – ICJ Advisory Opinion (2024), UNSC Res. 2334.
2. **Syrian Golan Heights** – UNSC Res. 497 (1981).
3. **Crimea** – UNGA Res. 68/262 (2014).
4. **Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia** – UNGA Res. ES-11/4 (2022).
5. **Western Sahara** – Listed as Non-Self-Governing Territory by UN; Morocco's occupation deemed unlawful. [UN Decolonization List \[icrc.org\]](#)
6. **Northern Cyprus** – UNSC Res. 541

Occupation vs. Armed Conflict

Occupation is not the same as active war. Under international law, a territory is considered occupied when it is under the effective control of a foreign power without the consent of its legitimate sovereign authority. This situation can exist **during armed conflict** or **after hostilities have ceased**. Occupation refers to control and administration, not necessarily ongoing combat. While occupation often results from war, an occupied region may experience relative stability or intermittent violence rather than continuous warfare.

Appendix B: Definitions

Artwashing

The use of art, artists, or cultural events to improve the public image of a regime, corporation, or institution associated with unethical or oppressive practices. It often masks injustice by associating it with creativity, cultural engagement, or progress, distracting from human rights abuses or political repression.

Cultural Inclusion

The active recognition and respect of diverse cultural identities and expressions. It means ensuring artists from all backgrounds are treated equitably, are free to present their work authentically, and are not pressured to conform to dominant narratives or suppress their heritage.

Ethical Awareness

A conscious approach to decision-making that considers the moral and political implications of representation, funding, and partnerships. It involves avoiding complicity in oppression or exploitation and aligning actions with principles of human rights, transparency, and artistic integrity.

Whitewashing

The deliberate sanitisation or omission of political, cultural, or ethical realities, such as occupation, discrimination, or systemic oppression, to make them more acceptable or commercially viable. In artist representation, this may involve rebranding politically charged work as neutral or erasing aspects of an artist's identity.

Appendix C: Examples

Example 1: Artist from an Occupied Region

An artist from a region under occupation wishes to tour internationally. Midnight Mango may represent them, provided their work is independent, not funded by the occupying power, and they identify themselves according to their own cultural or national background.

Example 2: Artist Funded by an Oppressive Regime

If an artist's tour or recordings are financed by an occupying regime, Midnight Mango will not represent them, even if the art itself is non-political. Association with such funding risks legitimising or benefiting the oppressor.

Example 3: Political Expression

An artist uses their platform to criticise an occupying regime. Midnight Mango may represent them, provided their expression does not promote hate or violence. Artistic activism is part of free expression and cultural resistance.

Example 4: Neutral or Mixed Context

An artist from a conflict region seeks to avoid political engagement. Midnight Mango may still represent them if their independence is clear and their work does not indirectly promote or normalise oppression.

Example 5: Event in an Occupied Region

A promoter in an occupied territory invites an artist to perform at a festival. Midnight Mango will only support this if the event is organised by independent local bodies, not by the occupying regime, and if participation does not serve as propaganda or legitimise occupation.

Example 6: Artist with Mixed Funding

An artist receives partial funding from a cultural programme linked to a regime accused of human rights abuses. Midnight Mango will decline representation.

Example 7: Collaboration Across Divides

Two artists from opposing sides of a conflict propose a joint tour promoting peace and dialogue. Midnight Mango may support this, provided the collaboration is genuine, not state-sponsored, and does not whitewash oppression.

Example 8: Performance in a Disputed Territory

An artist wishes to perform in a disputed region where travel restrictions exclude local residents. Midnight Mango will not support events that enforce discriminatory access or marginalise indigenous communities.

Example 9: Artist Using Art for Hate Speech

An artist's work includes messaging that promotes violence or dehumanisation of a group. Midnight Mango will not represent them, regardless of their political context or cultural background.

Appendix D: Possible example of a show contract clause

Occupied Regions Clause

The Purchaser agrees that the Event, its sponsors, and its funding will not be affiliated with, promoting, or receiving support from any oppressive or occupying regime, or any organization funded or endorsed by such regimes, as defined in Midnight Mango's **Artists and Occupied Regions Policy** (including the non-exclusive list of regions in Appendix A). If the Artist reasonably determines that this condition has been breached, the Artist may terminate this Agreement without liability or penalty. The policy is freely available in the Policies section of our website here <https://www.midnightmango.co.uk/policies/>

Appendix E: FAQ's

1. What is an "occupied region" according to this policy?

An occupied region is a territory under the effective control of a foreign power, without the consent of its legitimate sovereign authority. We use international law and United Nations guidance to determine which regions are considered occupied.

2. Does this policy only apply to artists from occupied regions?

No. It also applies to artists from occupying communities who reject oppression and act independently of oppressive systems.

3. How does Midnight Mango decide which regions are covered?

We rely on definitions and lists from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), United Nations resolutions, and other international legal sources. See Appendix A of our policy for the current list.

4. How does this policy relate to Midnight Mango's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policy?

Our EDI policy applies universally to all artists and situations. The Artists and Occupied Regions Policy is an additional layer that specifically addresses ethical representation in regions affected by occupation.

5. What happens if a promoter or event is linked to an oppressive regime?

If we discover that an event, sponsor, or funding is linked to an oppressive or occupying regime, we reserve the right to withdraw from the agreement without penalty.

6. How often is this policy reviewed?

We review and update the policy annually, or sooner if global developments require it.

7. Where can I read the full policy?

You can find the complete policy and appendices on our website: [midnightmango.co.uk/policies](https://www.midnightmango.co.uk/policies)

