

Airbnb Homestay Lodging Company Removes Israeli Settlement Listings

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Global Research, November 21, 2018

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

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US-based Airbnb runs a global online marketplace/hospitality service, letting members arrange or offer lodging, mainly homestays in residences of locals in cities where they travel.

Company revenue comes from commissions on bookings – none henceforth from removed Israeli settlement listings.

Airbnb yielded to years of pressure from Palestinian human rights groups. About 200 West Bank housing listings will be removed, a company statement saying the following:

“(M)any in the global community have stated that companies should not do business (in Israeli settlements) because they believe companies should not profit on lands where people have been displaced.”

“We concluded that we should remove listings in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank that are at the core of the dispute between Israelis and Palestinians.”



Delistings will take place in the coming days, according to Reuters. Human Rights Watch’s director for Israel and the Palestinian territories, Omar Shakid, called Airbnb’s decision a “welcome step,” adding “(c)ompanies like Booking.com should follow suit.”

Under international law, Israeli settlements are flagrantly illegal – developed on stolen Palestinian land.

Fourth Geneva’s Article 49 states: “The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”

The Hague Convention forbids occupying powers from altering occupied territory, except for military necessity, clearly not the case in the Occupied Territories.

The UN, its Security Council, the International Court of Justice, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and numerous human rights groups call Israeli settlements flagrantly illegal.

Longstanding equivocal US policy considers them “illegitimate,” not illegal – until Trump abandoned all pretense about Israeli/Palestinian evenhandedness, one-sidedly supporting the Jewish state, spurning fundamental Palestinian rights.

Former White House press secretary Sean Spicer revealed Trump regime policy on settlements, saying in 2017:

“We don’t believe the existence of settlements is an impediment to peace” – polar-opposite what’s true, clearly endorsing what’s flagrantly illegal under international law.

A formerly classified September 1967 document revealed that Israeli PM Levi Eshkol’s legal adviser Theodor Meron said

“civilian settlement in the administered territories contravenes the explicit provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.”

In April 1978, Jimmy Carter’s State Department legal advisor Herbert Hansell called settlements “inconsistent with international law.”

Ronald Reagan disagreed with the Carter administration on the illegality of settlements, calling them “unnecessarily provocative” instead.

In 1982, Reagan called for a moratorium on settlement development, saying they’re hindrances to peace talks.

Half a century after Israel’s 1967 aggression, seizing remaining Palestinian territory it failed to occupy in 1948, including East Jerusalem, Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics data indicate around 600,000 Israeli settlers occupy stolen Palestinian West Bank land. Over 200,000 other settlers live in Occupied East Jerusalem.

On July 30, 1980, the Knesset’s Jerusalem Law illegally annexed the UN-designated international city as Israel’s unified capital.

On March 1, 1980, UN Security Council Resolution 465 declared that “all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof, have no legal validity and that Israel’s policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants in those territories constitute a flagrant (Fourth Geneva) violation...and also constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.”

All Security Council resolutions are binding international law. In America, they’re also constitutional law under the Supremacy Clause (Article VI, Clause 2).

On July 4, 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that “Israeli settlements in the

Occupied Territory, including East Jerusalem, are illegal and an obstacle to peace and to economic and social development (and) have been established in breach of international law.”

Since establishment of the Jewish state in May 1948, its ruling authorities have systematically and repeatedly breached international laws, norm and standards unaccountably.

Israeli settlers reside in 127 strategically located West Bank settlements, dozens more in East Jerusalem, settlement enclaves in Hebron, along with about 100 “settlement outposts” – established to make a contiguous Palestinian state in the Territories impossible to achieve.

Business enterprises operating in the Occupied Territories flagrantly violate international law. Airbnb’s pullout is a welcome step.

Far more is needed from global businesses, notably numerous US and other Western corporations, operating illegally in the Territories, profiting from Israel’s flagrant abuse of power.

Settlement construction escalated under Netanyahu. Their development is the main obstacle to conflict resolution.

It’s unattainable as long as most Palestinian land remains illegally occupied.

A Final Comment

Ahead of Airbnb’s decision to remove settlement listings, a petition by Jewish Voices for Peace, CODEPINK, and six other human rights groups called on the company “to immediately stop listing vacation rentals in Israeli settlements.”

An online Twitter petition headlined “Tell #Airbnb: #Palestinians can’t #LiveThere, So Don’t Rent There.”

After years of equivocating, the company did the right thing. Israel isn’t pleased.

Its strategic affairs minister Gilad Erdan called on Occupied Territory hosts to sue Airbnb, citing Israel’s 2011 apartheid Anti-Boycott Law as unjustifiable justification.

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