

Ireland to Discuss New Bill Criminalising Trade with Israeli Settlements

By [Middle East Monitor](#)

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Featured image: Illegal construction work of settlements in the West Bank on 22 February 2017 (Issam Rimawi/Anadolu Agency)

Ireland is set to discuss a new bill that seeks to prohibit the import and sale of goods originating in illegal settlements in occupied Palestinian Territory.

Independent **Senator Frances Black**, yesterday, launched the “Control of Economic Activities (Occupied Territories) Bill 2018”, which is scheduled for debate in Seanad Éireann on Wednesday 31 January 2018.

According to a press release announcing its launch the bill “seeks to prohibit the import and sale of goods, services and natural resources originating in illegal settlements in occupied territories”.

“Such settlements,” said the statement, “are illegal under both international humanitarian law and domestic Irish law, and result in human rights violations on the ground”.

Despite the illegality of the import and sale of goods from Israeli settlements, the statement points out that Ireland is still providing “continued economic support through trade in settlement goods”.

Drafters of the bill revealed that the legislation had been “prepared with the support of Trócaire, Christian-Aid and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), and applies to settlements in occupied territories where there is clear international legal consensus that they violate international law”. They insisted that the “clearest current example of these violations were the expansion of settlements in the Palestinian West Bank, which have been repeatedly condemned as illegal by the UN, EU, the International Court of Justice and the Irish Government”.

Speaking in advance of the bill’s introduction, Senator Black said:

“This is a chance for Ireland to stand up for the rights of vulnerable people – it is about respecting international law and refusing to support illegal activity and human suffering.”

Black said he is “passionate about the struggle of the Palestinian people”. He insisted that “trade in settlement goods sustains injustice” and explained that “in the occupied territories, people are forcibly kicked out of their homes, fertile farming land is seized, and the fruit and vegetables produced are then sold on Irish shelves to pay for it all”.

The bill is seeking more than mere denunciation of Israeli settlements and is trying to get governments around the world to treat settlements as illegal. Black pointed out that six years ago the Irish Government criticised the relentless progress of Israeli settlements, but they have failed to do anything about it since.

“In years since then it has only gone one way, with settlements expanding, more Palestinian homes being demolished and land being confiscated. It’s clear that empty promises have not worked but nothing has been done. Ireland needs to show leadership and act” Black protested.

The Occupied Territories Bill 2018 will be debated at Second Stage in Seanad Éireann on Wednesday and will be streamed live on *Oireachtas TV*. It has been co-signed by Seanad Civil Engagement Group Senators **Alice-Mary Higgins, Lynn Ruane, Grace O’Sullivan, Colette Kelleher** and **John Dolan**, as well as **Senator David Norris**.

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