



Settlements – ending trade and investment in war crimes

Settlements are residential, industrial and farming **colonies**, built on Palestinian land, and annexed/ occupied with the approval and direct or indirect support of the Israeli government. They are serviced by the Israeli state and protected by both the Israeli army and armed settlers, usually located on hill tops or high fertile ground and surrounded by ‘security’ barriers or walls. Violence perpetrated by the settler population towards the local Palestinian population is a daily fact of life. This violence is often carried out under the protection of the Israeli army and is rarely investigated or punished. Settlements can be understood as constituting ‘facts on the ground’; permanent fixtures to be used as bargaining chips by the Israeli state in negotiations with Palestinians on a long term political settlement.

Colonies/Settlements are in breach of international law

Article 49 of the 4th Geneva Convention specifically forbids the transfer of population into an occupied area by the occupying power. The Hague Regulations forbid an occupying power from making permanent changes in the occupied area. Article 8 of the International Criminal Court Rome Statute states that transfer of population into an occupied area is a war crime. That the settlements are illegal under international law is a fact that has been upheld by the International Court of Justice and by the UN Security Council.

Colonies/Settlements are undermining the creation of a Palestinian state

Continued settlement growth is **the** major stumbling block to the creation of a Palestinian state. *A viable Palestinian state is impossible to create without a full dismantlement of settlements and their population from the West Bank to the pre-1967 borders.*

Only outside pressure can change Israeli policy

The Palestinian economy faces severe challenges as a direct result of the Israeli Occupation. In sharp contrast, the settlement economy, in particular, the agricultural, industrial and cosmetic sectors continues to grow, with easy access to EU and international export markets.

While there is consistent and repeated condemnation of settlement building across the international community, including in the past, strong statements from the Irish government, settlement building continues unabated and without consequence for the Israeli state. It is in Israel’s interest to continue construction of illegal settlements/colonies on Palestinian land. The only possibility of influencing Israel’s settlement policy is the application of economic pressure from the international community. Settlement building is a war crime; condemning it with words will have no effect. Sadaka believes that Ireland should seek an immediate EU ban on trade and investment with Israeli settlements.

Colonies/Settlements: Ireland should seek an EU ban on trade and investment with Israeli settlements, the construction of which has involved the commission of war crimes by Israel on a massive scale.