

Briefing by Amnesty International

Briefer: Mr. Laith Abu Zeyad

Subject: Presenting Amnesty International's recent report titled: ***Destination: Occupation. Digital Tourism and Israel's Illegal Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.*** The report sits within Amnesty's larger "Occupation @ 50 campaign" launched in June 2017. It builds on this campaign and expands its remit to cover the online tourism industry and its role in helping maintain and grow illegal Israeli settlements. It also draws on Amnesty International's extensive research, over many years, into Israel's human rights violations in the OPT.

Main argument and recommendations of the report:

- Airbnb, Booking.com, TripAdvisor and Expedia list numerous hotels, B&Bs, attractions or tours in Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). They are doing so despite knowing that Israel's occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is governed by international humanitarian law under which Israeli settlements are deemed illegal.
- These companies are contributing to violations of human rights law and acting in direct contradiction with their own corporate standards. Their promotion of Israeli settlements in the OPT as a tourist destination also has the effect of "normalizing", and legitimizing to the public what is recognized under international law as an illegal situation.
- These companies also know that the United Nations and independent international organizations, including Amnesty International and many Palestinian and Israeli organizations, have documented, for years, how Israel's policy of developing, expanding and guarding its settlements is inherently discriminatory and behind a wide range of human rights violations.
- To comply with their responsibilities to uphold international humanitarian law and respect human rights, Airbnb, Booking.com, Expedia and TripAdvisor must therefore stop listing tourist accommodation, activities and attractions in settlements or run by settlers in the OPT, including East Jerusalem.
- Digital tourism companies must also take steps to remediate the violations they have contributed to. As stated before, the UN Guiding Principles clearly indicate that companies should remediate any human rights abuse that they have caused or to which they have contributed.
- States must take regulatory action to prevent tourism companies, including digital tourism companies, domiciled or headquartered in their territory from providing or facilitating the provision of tourism services in illegal Israeli settlements or by settlers in the OPT. These services may include rental accommodation and holiday activities and attractions.
- States must support the UN Database and the OHCHR's work to compile and regularly update the UN Database as a necessary and proportionate tool to promote greater transparency, accountability and respect for international law by both states and businesses.