



CANADIAN MUSLIM PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

CMPAC Statement Condemning Israel Real Estate Seminars Selling Illegal Settlements in the West Bank

March 5th, 2024, Oakville - The Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council (CMPAC) condemns the organization and promotion of Israel Real Estate Seminars currently taking place in the United States and Canada, wherein illegal settlements in the West Bank are being marketed for sale. The “*Great Real Estate Event*”, as advertised on www.realestateisrael.org, violates international and Canadian law, contributes to the perpetuation of human rights abuses, and exploits religious institutions for commercial gain. The seminars are scheduled to take place in Canada on the following dates: Tuesday, March 5th at The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue in Montreal, and Thursday, March 7th at The BAYT in Toronto.

The aforementioned illegal Israeli settlements, which are being promoted at these events, are widely acknowledged as a human rights violation against the five million Palestinians living under occupation.¹ As highlighted by Amnesty International, Israel’s settlement enterprise has thrived through systematic oppression, resulting in numerous human rights violations, including demolitions of Palestinian homes, displacement of indigenous populations, and unlawful appropriation of Palestinian resources.² This is evidenced by the forcible displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to date and the appropriation of Palestinian land for exclusive settlement use.³

Both international and domestic Canadian law consider Israeli settlements illegal. Specifically, the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2334⁴ and 465⁵ affirm the illegality of these settlements under international law. Furthermore, Canadian law⁶, including the Geneva Conventions Act⁷ and the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act⁸, prohibits any form of support or assistance to these illegal settlements.⁹

CMPAC echoes the sentiments expressed by concerned citizens, including Mr. Rich Siegel, Jewish resident of Teaneck, NJ, at a Teaneck Township Council meeting, wherein he highlighted the egregious violation of both domestic and international law by hosting such events. The participation of religious institutions, such as synagogues, in facilitating these seminars further exacerbates the gravity of the situation. Places of worship must uphold ethical standards and refrain from involvement in activities that perpetuate injustice and discrimination.

It is imperative that all stakeholders, including government officials and religious leaders, take decisive action to put an end to these unlawful practices. CMPAC reiterates that the sale of properties in illegal settlements is not only unlawful but also morally reprehensible. By engaging in such transactions, individuals and organizations risk being complicit in the ongoing genocide and displacement of indigenous Palestinian populations. As Canadians, we have a responsibility to ensure that our actions do not support or enable such egregious violations of human rights.

Furthermore, in light of Canada's foreign policy stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which acknowledges the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territories and condemns the Israeli settlements as a violation of international law, it is incumbent

upon the Canadian government to take action to uphold its legal obligations. Therefore, CMPAC calls for the following immediate actions to address this issue:

1. **Immediate Cessation of Real Estate Seminars:** We demand the immediate cessation of all Israel Real Estate Seminars and related activities promoting the sale of properties in illegal settlements. The continued facilitation of these events is unacceptable and must be met with swift and decisive measures. These events not only contravene international law, but also undermine Canada's commitment to justice, equality, and human rights.
2. **Government Intervention:** We call upon the Canadian government to intervene and enforce measures prohibiting the promotion and sale of properties located in illegal settlements. It is imperative that Canada complies with its binding obligations, both under international law and Canadian law, and takes a principled stand against complicity in human rights abuses.
3. **Charitable Religious Institutions Must Not Participate:** Religious institutions, including synagogues, must refrain from hosting events that facilitate the sale of properties in illegal settlements in violation of international law. The exploitation of places of worship for commercial purposes is unacceptable and undermines the integrity of religious freedom and charitable activities. Charitable religious institutions must act within their charitable purposes and should not act against public benefit. We urge synagogues and other places of worship to uphold ethical standards and refuse to participate in activities that perpetuate injustice and contribute to the suffering of marginalized communities.

CMPAC emphasizes the importance of public awareness and advocacy in addressing this issue. Canadians must be informed about the illegality and immorality of investing in properties located in illegal settlements and advocate for ethical investment practices that respect human rights and international law.

References

1. "While the Palestinian economy has been stunted by 50 years of abusive policies, a thriving multimillion-dollar settlement enterprise has been built out of the systematic oppression of the Palestinian population." (Source: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/06/states-must-ban-israeli-settlement-products-to-help-end-half-a-century-of-violations-against-palestinians/>)
2. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2017/06/israel-occupation-50-years-of-dispossession/>
3. "Israel's policy of settling Israeli civilians on occupied Palestinian land has led to a myriad of human rights violations. Tens of thousands of Palestinian homes and properties have been demolished by Israel and hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been forcibly displaced; many families were pushed out of their homes or land to clear areas for settlement construction. At least 100,000 hectares of Palestinian land have been appropriated for exclusive settlement use." (Source: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/06/states-must-ban-israeli-settlement-products-to-help-end-half-a-century-of-violations-against-palestinians/>)
4. United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 (23 December 2016) stated that the Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank were a "flagrant violation under international law" and called upon all States "to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967."
5. United Nations Security Council Resolution 465 (1 March 1980) affirmed the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied Palestinian territory, held that the Israeli settlements are a "flagrant violation" of the Convention, and called upon "all States not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically in connexion with settlements in the occupied territories."
6. Geneva Conventions Act (Common Article 1): Canada has a legal obligation to "respect and ensure respect" for all of the provisions of the Conventions: "The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances."
7. The Israeli settlements are in violation of the Geneva Conventions Act, R.S.C. 1985, c. G-3 (Schedule IV, Article 49, para.6), which reads: "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." Schedule V, Article 85(4)(a) of the Geneva Conventions Act, the Israeli settlements would be deemed to be a "grave breach" of the Act: "the following shall be regarded as grave breaches of this Protocol, when committed wilfully and in violation of the Conventions or the Protocol: (a) the transfer by the occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies, or the deportation or transfer of all or parts of the population of the occupied territory within or outside this territory, in violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Convention."
8. Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act, S.C. 2000, c. 24, at Schedule 2(1), Article 8(2)(b)(viii), the Israeli settlements would be a presumptive war crime: "the transfer, directly or indirectly, by the Occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies, or the deportation or transfer of all or parts of the population of the occupied territory within or outside this territory."
9. This position has been affirmed by the International Court of Justice, the United Nations General Assembly, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Union, Amnesty International, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, Human Rights Watch and B'Tselem. The Israeli settlements are widely accepted to be a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention (Article 49, para. 6) and a grave breach under the 1977 Additional Protocol 1 to the Convention (Article 85(4)). They are also a presumptive war crime under the 1998 Rome Statute (Article 8(2)(b)(viii) of the Appendix on War Crimes).