



TC MDE 15/2019.004

Index: MDE 15/0659/2019

10 July 2019

Open letter from Amnesty International to TripAdvisor staff

Dear TripAdvisor employees,

We are writing to ask you to join us in speaking out against TripAdvisor's role in driving human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Amnesty International is the world's largest human rights organization, with more than seven million supporters and members globally. Through research and campaigning, we help ensure respect for people's human rights and that those who violate them are held accountable.

We also campaign for a world in which companies respect human rights and don't contribute to, or profit from, human rights violations wherever they operate in the world.

In January of this year, Amnesty's report [Destination Occupation](#) revealed that TripAdvisor and other online booking companies, are profiting from war crimes by listing tourist attractions and properties in illegal Israeli settlements.

Our research found that TripAdvisor lists more than 70 different attractions, tours, restaurants, cafes, hotels and rental apartments in settlements across the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Israel has built these settlements, in flagrant violation of international law, since its occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in 1967.

The settlements have had a devastating impact on Palestinian communities over the past five decades. To make way for their construction, Israel has demolished tens of thousands of Palestinian homes, forcibly displaced large portions of the population and diverted water and other Palestinian natural resources for settlement use.

To maintain and expand illegal settlements Israel imposes a system of institutionalized discrimination and human rights violations from which hundreds of thousands of Palestinians suffer on daily basis.

By promoting tourism in these illegal settlements, TripAdvisor is boosting their economy, helping them to expand and contributing to the mass suffering they have caused.

Last year, Amnesty International researchers visited a West Bank village called Khirbet Susiya. For the past 40 years the villagers have been living in makeshift homes and tents after they were forcibly evicted to make

room for the expansion of the Israeli settlement of Susya. The settlement is surrounded by vineyards and orchards and has a large swimming pool. By contrast, Israel has refused to connect Palestinian homes to the water and sewage system and electricity networks, making life for them a daily struggle. Villagers also suffer regular harassment from settlers and live in constant fear of their homes being destroyed.

The settlement – built on stolen Palestinian land - is thriving. This is partly thanks to the tourism industry. TripAdvisor currently provides tourist information on two settlement-run attractions – a vineyard and the archaeological site - both on land that belongs to the Palestinians of Khirbet Susiya. But they will not see a cent of the profits that tourism will bring to the site.

This is just one example of how TripAdvisor is boosting settlement economies while driving human rights violations against Palestinians.

By promoting Israeli settlements as tourist destinations, TripAdvisor is also glossing over their horrifying human rights record and normalizing to the public what is recognized under international law as an illegal situation.

As one of the most visited online tourism websites by foreign visitors to Israel, TripAdvisor is hugely influential – it has the power to help stop this injustice.

As TripAdvisor employees, we believe you too have a real power to make a difference by speaking out and demanding that the company stops listing accommodation and tourist attractions based in Israeli settlements.

Last year, [Google employees joined](#) Amnesty International in a call to drop a censored search engine in China, Dragonfly. Thanks to Google employees speaking out, the project [was dropped](#).

By cutting business ties with illegal settlements, TripAdvisor would be leading the way in the travel sector and demonstrating a true commitment to ending human rights abuses.

We urge you to do the right thing: stand up for human rights and help us and your company put an end to decades of war crimes and other grave violations.

Sincerely,

Amnesty International