**Reports Israeli government plans to retaliate against Amnesty International over settlements campaign**

Amnesty International

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Responding to reports circulating in Israeli media today suggesting that the Israeli Finance Ministry is planning to take action against the organization and its donors under Israel’s controversial 2011 anti-boycott law, over its campaign calling on governments to ban imports of Israeli settlement products, Magdalena Mughrabi, Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa at Amnesty International said:

“The reports that the Israeli government plans to punish Amnesty International over its settlements campaign are deeply alarming. While we have not been officially informed of any such action by the authorities, if true, this would be a serious setback to freedom of expression and an ominous sign for the ability of human rights NGOs in Israel to operate freely and without arbitrary interference.”

Amnesty International has received no official notification about whether any action is to be taken and is seeking confirmation from the Israeli Ministry of Finance.

Israeli media have reported that the Israeli authorities will change the status of Amnesty International’s Israeli section so that donations to the organization will no longer be tax-deductible. Amnesty International’s Israeli section only became eligible for the tax benefit last October.

“Taking punitive action against Amnesty International over its settlements campaign would constitute a brazen attack by the Israeli authorities on the organization’s legitimate human rights work. It would also be the latest effort by the authorities to silence human rights organizations and activists who criticize the Israeli government and call for accountability,” said Magdalena Mughrabi.

Amnesty International has repeatedly emphasized that the very existence of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories violates international law, a matter on which there is international consensus and is reflected in UN Security Council resolutions. Settlements have contributed to decades of mass suffering and violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

As a human rights organization, Amnesty International aims to ensure that governments uphold their obligations under international law and are not fuelling such violations themselves. That’s why the organization’s campaign directs its call at states across the world; asking them to stop assisting an illegal situation by financially sustaining Israel’s abusive, discriminatory, and unlawful settlement policy.

By allowing imports of Israeli settlement goods to their markets and allowing companies in their countries to operate in settlements, or trade in settlement goods, the international community is directly helping the illegal settlement industry profit and thrive. An end to the settlement enterprise is essential to ending the mass violations suffered by Palestinians living under Israel’s occupation.

Amnesty International generally does not support or oppose consumer boycotts. The organization does however defend people’s rights to participate in and advocate for boycotts if they choose to and has campaigned on behalf of those who have been punished for doing so.