

# UK Labour government colludes in illegal sale of stolen Palestinian land

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Britain's Labour government allowed the "Great Israeli Real Estate Event" to take place June 14, an international roadshow openly marketing stolen Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. Some of the participants openly advertised land sales in Israeli settlements, while simultaneously denying that illegal settlement homes would be promoted.

The decision not only confirms the government's support for Israel but also exposes the fraud of its professed opposition to the Israeli takeover of Palestinian land for settlement construction. Illegal settlement construction has accelerated under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's fascist government.

Under international law, the UK government is obligated not to recognise Israel's settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem or to provide any aid or assistance that helps maintain them. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) 2024 advisory opinion reaffirmed the illegality of the occupation and called on UN member states not to facilitate Israel's illegal occupation, including through trade or investment.

The settlements, now home to more than 700,000 Israelis, and the roads linking them to each other and to Israel have been built on land seized from Palestinians and Syrians. Their construction has appropriated much of the region's water resources and entailed the forced displacement of entire communities.

The London event, for invitees only, was part of an international roadshow that previously visited Toronto and New York City encouraging prospective buyers from the United States, the UK and South Africa to "explore the best Anglo neighbourhoods" where English-speaking people could find their "dream home".

Pamphlets advertised properties in Givat Zeev and Teneh Omarim in the occupied West Bank, as well as settlements in East Jerusalem. One leaflet promoted an "Exciting new project just 10 minutes from Jerusalem!"

and "Some with pools!" in Maale Adumim—a West Bank settlement close to East Jerusalem. The event had invited people to register their interest in Gush Etzion, a settlement bloc south of Jerusalem.

So explicit was the sales pitch that 101 members of parliament, including from Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour government, had signed an open letter saying that the event was "embedded in Israel's project of colonial expansion". They called on the government to "uphold its obligations under international law" and ensure the event "promoting illegal activities does not proceed".

Labour MP Andy McDonald, co-chair of the British-Palestine all-party parliamentary group, used the incident to back NATO's proxy war in Ukraine. "You would not accept anybody offering settlement lands in the Donbas in the United Kingdom. The government would, quite rightly, come down on that like a ton of bricks," he stated.

Sadiq Khan, the Labour mayor of London, was obliged to oppose the event for advertising the sale of land in illegal Israeli settlements.

Kristyan Benedict, Amnesty International UK's Crisis Response Manager, said, "While Israel ethnically cleanses Palestinians from their ancestral lands, a real estate event that includes companies openly trying to sell stolen Palestinian land is coming to London. This event, which profits from war crimes and apartheid, is an affront to every Palestinian that has had their home, their land, and their livelihood cruelly taken away from them by Israel's illegal occupation."

He added, "The UK cannot condemn settlements with one hand while allowing them to be openly marketed here with the other. Stop this event, ban settlement trade, and start treating Israel's ethnic cleansing campaign with the urgency it demands."

Organisers, My Home in Israel, who had previously denied that the homes and land for sale were in the West

Bank, called the allegations “ridiculous” and “motivated by anti-Israeli and terrorist supporters”. But on June 9, after MPs challenged the government in parliament, they apologised for the “error” in their brochures and removed references to sales in the settlement blocs from their website.

Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper used the debate in the House of Commons to announce that the UK, along with Canada, France and Norway, was imposing sanctions on six firms and one individual involved in enabling and financing some of the recent settler violence in the West Bank. But Cooper rejected a total ban on trade with the settlements—as demanded by 238 MPs—claiming it would be difficult to enforce. This was absurd, given that the UK has a long list of trade embargoes and restrictions with countries, territories and regions “to support international peace, security, and human rights”. Instead, the government would update its advice to British firms to “avoid” economic activity with the settlements.

Such derisory measures will not deter Israel’s settlement activity—and are not intended to.

The report *Importing Occupation*, published by the Global Echo Litigation Centre last week, examined 30,000 export records covering 6,827 agricultural shipments exported from Israel between October 2017 and February 2026. It found that more than 17 percent of shipments to Europe from Israel originated from illegal settlements, up from 2.23 percent in 2011. The report documented several methods of “supply chain obfuscation” used to conceal the true origin of settlement products. Europe is by far Israel’s largest trading partner and foreign investor.

The only actual response of the Labour government regarding the London real estate event was a letter from Foreign Office minister Hamish Falconer to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) asking it to look for any evidence of settlement property advertising.

As with the roadshows in Toronto and New York City, the London event was held at a synagogue in a bid to recruit prospective settlers and sell them land.

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), Jewish Bloc for Palestine UK, and International Centre of Justice for Palestinians, issued a formal legal notice to the Edgware United Synagogue, and warned that “Organisers are using a place of worship as cover for potentially criminal activity”.

*Al Jazeera* cited one of the attendees, a member of the Jewish Anti-Zionist Action (JAZA) group, saying that there was a heavy security presence there, including

plainclothes men fitted with body cameras. Real estate agents reportedly pitched the war on Gaza as a buying opportunity, with falling prices and potential discounts.

Another JAZA activist who gained entry said he was offered properties in “Judea and Samaria” with the company representative ready to provide details privately because the police had said if the event was to go ahead, they couldn’t advertise the properties.

Hundreds of supporters and opponents of the marketing event gathered outside the synagogue. The *Middle East Eye* website reported pro-Israel supporters chanting, “There is no Palestine, we flattened it”, while children shouted “whores” and “prostitutes” at pro-Palestine activists. Police arrested 15 people for violence and disorder, seven of whom were pro-Israel supporters and six pro-Palestine, according to the Metropolitan Police.

The British government permitted the event even as United Nations bodies warn that Israel’s measures to tighten control of areas of the West Bank administered by the Palestinian Authority amount to “gradual de facto annexation.”

As Israel’s war of annihilation in Gaza continues, far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich—who also controls the West Bank’s civil administration—has pledged to promote the “emigration” of Palestinians. He and other cabinet ministers have repeatedly stated that their policies are designed to achieve de facto annexation: transferring full civilian control of large parts of the West Bank to Israel without formally declaring annexation. Smotrich’s project is explicit—a massive land grab and ethnic cleansing to bring a million Israeli settlers into the West Bank and “eliminate the threat of a Palestinian state.”

Earlier this year, Israel announced its intention to expel Palestinians from their land and convert territory occupied since 1967—never officially annexed—into “state land” belonging to Israel. Any land to which Palestinians cannot prove their ownership in the territory designated as Area C under the 1993 Oslo Accords is to be registered as state-owned land, which Israelis and Jews overseas are then entitled to lease and build upon.



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