

New legislation aims to block New York charities from funding Israeli settlements

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A view shows the illegal Israeli settlement of Har Homa in the Israeli-occupied West Bank

New York, May 21 (RHC)-- A New York State assembly member has introduced a legislation to stop charities from sending millions of dollars to Israel to stop its settlement expansion activities across the occupied Palestinian territories which are being advanced in flagrant violation of the international law.

The legislation, dubbed “Not on our dime!: Ending New York Funding of Israeli Settler Violence Act,” was introduced by state assembly member Zohran Mamdani, the third Muslim in the New York State assembly, earlier this week. It would give the state attorney general authority to sue and dissolve not-for-profit organizations that are found to be using their tax-deductible donations to support organizations funding illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank.

The legislation would also give Palestinians harmed by settler organizations funded by New York-based charities the right to seek damages in American courts. “Charities registered in New York State currently send more than \$60 million dollars a year in tax-deductible donations to aid and abet Israeli settlements. This is done on our dime as New Yorkers,” Mamdani said, the Middle East Eye reported on Thursday.

He added: “This legislation puts an end to that and makes explicit that subsidizing violence and activities outlawed by the Geneva Convention is not, and should not be considered, charitable giving. It’s past time for New York to catch up to international law.”

Mamdani noted that while this issue is important to him as a Muslim, as his faith informs his fight to ensure justice for all people, this is not a bill motivated by religion.

“It is a bill motivated by a desire that New York State stop subsidizing human rights violations through the conferring of charitable status to organizations such as these,” he said.

“Too often, we see an exception drawn when it comes to Palestine - whether it be in our policies or the application of them. This makes it clear that our belief in human rights is universal, without exception,” he added.

The legislation has already received some backlash. Mamdani highlighted that his office has received a call saying all Muslims should die and all Muslim lovers should be killed as well. “This is the reality when you dare speak up about Palestine and Palestinians,” he said. Additionally, 66 lawmakers signed an open letter condemning the legislation, saying it “attacks” Jewish organizations.

Emboldened by former U.S. president Donald Trump’s all-out support, Israel has stepped up its illegal settlement construction activities in defiance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334, which pronounced settlements in the West Bank and East al-Quds “a flagrant violation under international law.”

More than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East al-Quds. All Israeli settlements are illegal under international law. The UN Security Council has condemned Israel’s settlement activities in the occupied territories in several resolutions.

Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent state with East al-Quds as its capital.

Many Palestinians believe the Israeli plans to annex one-third of the already occupied West Bank, including parts of the strategic Jordan Valley, is only a formality and that a de facto Israeli occupation of their land has been underway for many years.

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