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As the ICC investigation begins, Jewish National Fund votes to build settlements.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK ([AOHR UK](#)) declares that the recent decision of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) to begin purchasing lands within the West Bank merely brings the JNF's long-term role – to accelerate and support the growth of [illegal settlements](#) within the Occupied Territories – into the open.

The Jewish National Fund's (JNF) Executive Committee voted yesterday, Sunday 11 April, to approve a recommended change to the organisation's policy on the purchase of lands within the Occupied West Bank.

This follows a vote by the JNF's board of directors in February to approve such purchases "in principle" , and to allocate nearly \$12 million to do so.

AOHR UK stated that, since its founding in 1901, the JNF has played a crucial role in the expulsion of Palestinians from [historic Palestine](#), of which the JNF now owns 13%. The executive committee's vote threatens to further open the door to the purchase and expansion of settlement lands, which are illegal under international law. The West Bank was captured by Israel during the 1967 war.

AOUR UK pointed out that the JNF was previously criticized for stipulating that only Jews were permitted to buy or rent its lands. This was contested in 2004 by Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel.

In 2008, an agreement was reached in Israel's High Court between the Israeli state and JNF, whereby the Israel Land Fund, which administers JNF lands, would distribute land without prejudice, though the JNF would be "compensated" for any of its lands sold or leased to Israeli Arab citizens. At the time of agreement, Adalah stated that, "a large part of the land under control of the JNF was awarded to it by the state during the 1950s, much of it confiscated from Palestinian refugees."



AOHR UK declares that the JNF's decision is a blatant violation of international law, according to which Israeli settlements within the West Bank are illegal. Hence, the JNF's funding of such settlements poses a challenge to various international and national bodies – will they turn a blind eye to such violations, or demand that the JNF conform to international law? Will the International Criminal Court's forthcoming [inquiry](#) – into possible war crimes committed in the besieged Gaza Strip and Occupied West Bank (including Al-Quds, or East Jerusalem) from 2014 onwards – investigate the ongoing, illegal [settlement](#) movement, and JNF's role in it?

AOHR UK calls for the international community to prohibit the collection of money that will be used to fund the displacement of Palestinians from their historic home, as happened during the 1948 Nakba, and for the JNF's role in the settlement movement to be within the purview of the [ICC investigation](#).

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK)