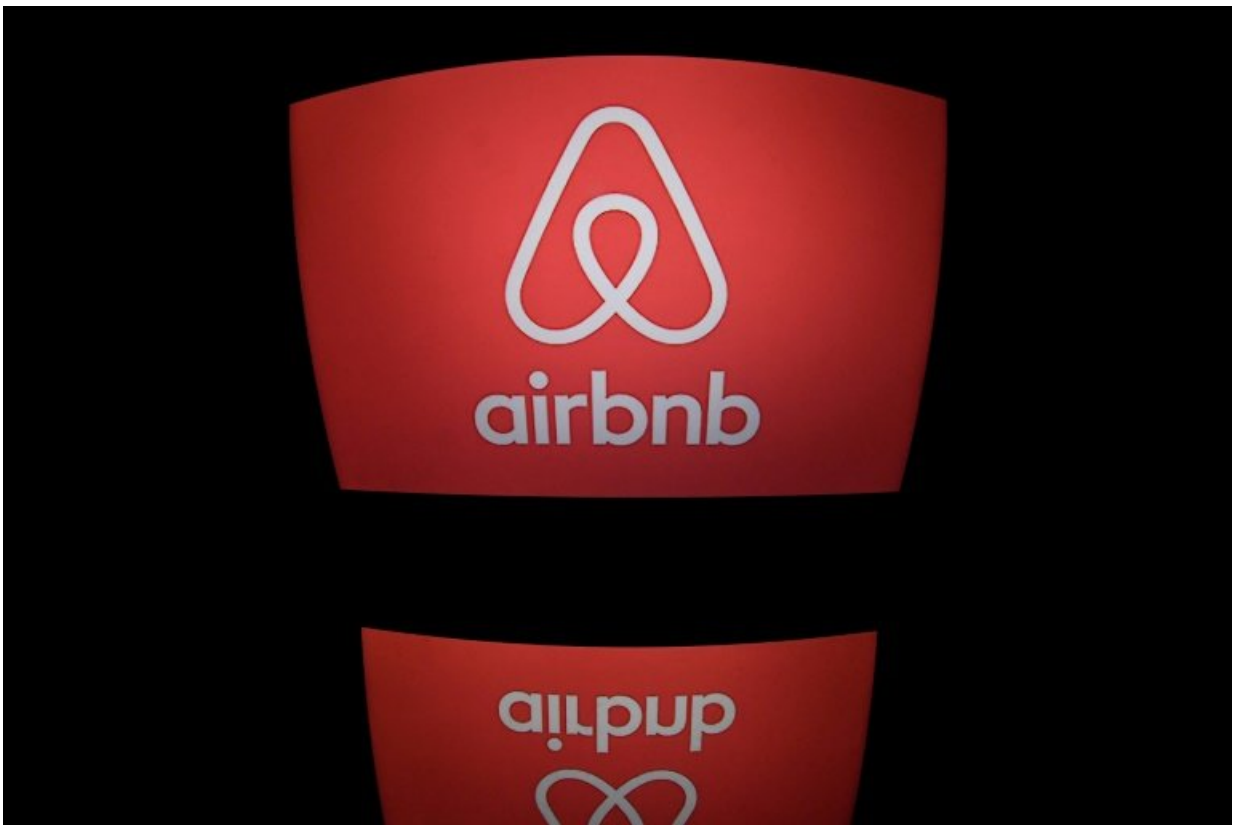


Israeli sues Airbnb over ouster of settler rentals

November 23 2018



San Francisco-based Airbnb said it would remove West Bank homes from its site, prompting Israel's tourism ministry to threaten legal action

Israeli lawyers have filed a class action against Airbnb after its decision to remove Jewish settler homes in the occupied West Bank from its

rental listings.

A spokesman for the attorneys, who spoke to AFP Friday on condition of anonymity, said the lead plaintiff was Maanit Rabinovich of [Kida settlement](#) in the West Bank.

Rabinovich says Airbnb never contacted her to warn her of its intention.

The suit, the spokesman said, seeks 15,000 shekels (3,500 euros) in damages for Rabinovich and each other settler host should Airbnb delete them from its listings.

San Francisco-based Airbnb said Monday it would remove West Bank homes from its site, prompting Israel's tourism ministry to threaten legal action.

The decision would affect around 200 homes in Israeli settlements that had been listed on the platform.

Around 400,000 Israelis live in settlements that dot the West Bank and range in size from tiny hamlets to large towns, in addition to 200,000 living in settlements in occupied east Jerusalem.

The international community considers the settlements to be illegal and a key barrier to peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Airbnb has said it "concluded that we should remove listings in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank that are at the core of the dispute between Israelis and Palestinians".

"We know that people will disagree with this decision and appreciate their perspective. This is a controversial issue," it said in a statement.

Israel's internal security minister, Gilad Erdan, called on settlers affected "to consider filing lawsuits against Airbnb".

Rabinovich's [suit](#) was filed Thursday in the Jerusalem district court, according to court documents seen by AFP.

It accuses Airbnb of "discriminating" against West Bank settlers while listing rooms to rent in other disputed territories around the world.

"China's control of Tibet has been condemned worldwide, and yet Airbnb offers 300 apartments for rent there," it says.

"In northern Cyprus, where control is deeply disputed between Greece and Turkey and has even led to war, Airbnb offers thousands of rental apartments."

The lawsuit also cites Georgia's separatist republic of Abkhazia and the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, saying that Airbnb lists about 300 rentals in the former and 138 in the latter.

"These partial examples testify to the fact that Airbnb has no policy regarding conflict zones around the world," it added.

"It has a policy regarding (Israeli) settlements, and only to them."

The US firm does not have an office in Israel, putting in doubt prospects of any ruling by the Jerusalem court being enforced.

The lawyers have drafted a request for leave to pursue the case in the United States.

Citation: Israeli sues Airbnb over ouster of settler rentals (2018, November 23) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-11-israeli-sues-airbnb-ouster-settler.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.