

Irish senate approves ban on products from Israeli settlements

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Despite anger from Israel, draft bill passes first round of voting in EU precedent

Ireland's senate has voted in favour of a bill banning the importation of products from Israeli-occupied [Palestinian territories](#), paving the way for the country to become the first EU nation to enforce a boycott.

The [bill](#), which has faced angry Israeli opposition, prohibits "trade with and economic support for illegal settlements in territories deemed occupied under international law".

Having been approved in the upper house of the Irish parliament, the Seanad, the legislation will now need to get through more Seanad votes and then the lower house before becoming law.

At Israel's urging, a previously scheduled vote in January was delayed at the Irish government's request. Israel's foreign ministry, which is headed by the prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, had summoned Ireland's ambassador to Israel, Alison Kelly, at the time.

Israel took control of the West Bank from Jordan in 1967, an area of land on which Palestinians hope to establish an independent state. Around 600,000 settlers live in occupied territory in east Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

Estimates put the value of settlement-made products to [Ireland](#) at between only €500,00 to €1m annually but proponents of the bill say it could chart a path for other EU states to follow.

Netanyahu has denounced the bill, saying it "gives a tailwind to those who seek to boycott Israel and is utterly contrary to the principles of free trade and justice". The bill does not ban all Israeli products.

Frances Black, the independent senator who sponsored the bill, said in a [statement](#) before the vote that "trade in settlement goods sustains injustice".

"In the occupied territories, people are forcibly kicked out of their homes, fertile farming land is seized, and the fruit and vegetables produced are then sold on Irish shelves to pay for it all," she said.

"These settlements are war crimes, and it's time for Ireland to show some leadership and refuse to support them."

The bill does not name Israel but instead refers to an "occupying power" and "illegal settler".

In 2015, the EU [issued guidelines](#) for the labelling of products from Israeli settlements, which it

considers illegal and says are an obstacle to peace.

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