



January 17, 2019

Tracy Stewart, CFA, CIPM  
Senior Corporate Governance Analyst  
Florida State Board of Administration  
1801 Hermitage Blvd., Suite 100  
Tallahassee, Florida 32308

Dear Ms. Stewart,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written materials regarding Airbnb. As a company that opposes the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions ("BDS") Movement, we appreciated the opportunity to discuss the issues outlined in this letter during our call on December 19, 2018 and demonstrate why our recent decision regarding certain listings in West Bank settlements does not constitute a "boycott" under Section 215.4725 of the Florida Statutes. Following up on that conversation and per your request, we are providing written answers to your questions herein.

**1. *Airbnb has unequivocally rejected the BDS movement.***

Airbnb strongly believes in the Israeli state. As such, Airbnb is not boycotting Israel, Israeli businesses, nor the more than 20,000 Israeli hosts who are active on the Airbnb platform.

In December, an Airbnb team led by a member of the company's Executive Team visited Israel. The Airbnb team met with a variety of stakeholders, including the Government of Israel, retired military officers, local elected officials, business leaders and residents of the West Bank, Airbnb hosts and others. As a result of these meetings, Airbnb has an even deeper understanding of this incredibly complex and sensitive issue.

During that trip, Airbnb reiterated its unequivocal rejection of the BDS movement and communicated the company's commitment to develop its business in Israel, including releasing a statement while on the ground that reiterated the company's rejection of the BDS movement (exhibit 1):

"Airbnb expressed its unequivocal rejection of the BDS movement and communicated its commitment to develop its business in Israel, enabling more tourists from around the world to enjoy the wonders of the country and its people. We are here to meet with a variety of stakeholders and as a result of our meetings have an even deeper understanding that this is an incredibly complex and emotional issue. Airbnb communicated that we are developing the tools needed to implement our policy and that process includes continuing our dialogue with the Government of Israel and other stakeholders."

There has been various public reporting (exhibit 2) in Israel on Airbnb's expression of opposition to BDS. [Forbes reported:](#)

"With more than 20,000 hosts and over a million guests, Airbnb has a significant investment in Israel and will continue to invest in Israel," says Airbnb head of global policy Chris Lehane. "We are categorically opposed to the BDS movement and are committed to our presence in Israel, from the Golan Heights to Jerusalem to the Sea of Galilee."

[Israel Nation News reported](#)

Samaria Council head Yossi Dagan today hosted Airbnb Vice President Chris [Lehane] in Samaria for a tour of the Barkan Industrial Zone.

"...I was very pleased to hear from Airbnb's senior staff about their stand against the BDS organization," he said.

Additionally, in the meetings with government officials, Airbnb communicated that the company is developing the tools needed to implement our policy and that process includes continuing our dialogue with the Government of Israel and other stakeholders.

**2. *Airbnb is a significant investor in Israel, supporting travel and tourism in the region – and will continue to be.***

Airbnb is a significant investor in Israel. In fact, Airbnb has even been criticized by some in the BDS movement because of the size of the Airbnb business in Israel. Over the last five years, Airbnb has invested \$20 million in support of our community and business activities in Israel. To the best of Airbnb's knowledge, the company is one of the leading investors in Israel travel and tourism. In order to provide empirical data as to the impact of Airbnb's investments in Israel, we are attaching a summary report of Airbnb's economic impact on travel and tourism in Israel that documents the following (exhibit 3):

- To date, there have been approximately 1.493 million guests who have traveled to Israel on Airbnb. Between November 2017 and November 2018 there were approximately 530,000 guests who traveled to Israel on Airbnb. To provide context as to the portion of the travel to Israel made possible by Airbnb's investment, public reports indicate that a total of approximately 4 million tourists came to Israel in 2018.
- Roughly 80% of these visitors hail from outside the country, with the remaining 20% of guests being locals who use Airbnb when visiting other parts of the world. The top origin destinations are the United States (23%), Israel (19%), Germany (10%), France (8%) and Great Britain (5%). These include approximately 8,000 Airbnb users from Florida, making Airbnb one of the important drivers of travel from Florida to Israel.
- Airbnb has 22,400 active hosts in Israel. Up to 97% of the money that these Israeli hosts list their homes for go to these Israeli hosts. The typical Israeli Airbnb host earns 10,000 Israeli shekels/year (2,700 U.S. dollars), hosting 28 times a year. Total Israeli host earnings that have been generated through the Airbnb platform in Israel is 400 million shekels. There are 3,600 Airbnb Superhosts (hosts who provide outstanding levels of hospitality) representing 11% of all Airbnb hosts in Israel and making clear that Israelis provides some of the best travel experiences in the world by embracing Hachnassat Orchim – the Jewish virtue of welcoming a guest.

Informed by Airbnb's support for the State of Israel, commitment to Airbnb's Israeli host community and rejection of the BDS movement, Airbnb is committed to continuing to invest in and support travel and tourism in Israel.

3. **Airbnb decided to stop allowing reservations in settlements in the West Bank -- while continuing to allow reservations in all of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights -- pursuant to a global framework on disputed territories. This policy aligns our presence in the region with that of U.S. multinational hotels.**

Airbnb is a global platform, with activity in 191 countries and 81,000 cities made possible by more than five million guests who have supported guest arrivals that is projected to be at 500 million during the first quarter of 2019. Given that Airbnb facilitates guests staying with hosts in their actual homes, the company is often asked about its role regarding reservations in listings in disputed territories around the world, particularly territories some consider occupied, and where homes -- the core of our business -- are central to ongoing tensions. The company has worked through this issue for years and it has been challenged to come up with the right approach. After speaking with experts, Airbnb developed a global framework for evaluating how it should treat listings in any disputed territory, including those outside of the West Bank. The Airbnb global framework is as follows:

1. Recognize that each situation is unique and requires a case-by-case approach.
2. Consult with a range of experts and our community of stakeholders.
3. Assess any potential safety risks for our hosts and guests.
4. Evaluate whether the existence of listings is contributing to existing human suffering.
5. Determine whether the existence of listings in the occupied territory has a direct connection to the larger dispute in the region.

After reviewing this global framework, Airbnb determined in November that it will no longer allow reservations for listings located in the West Bank settlements. The decision to not allow reservations in the settlements in the West Bank impacts fewer than 1% of the listings in the region (approximately 200 listings) -- and less than 0.2% of revenue in the region. Hosts whose listings may be impacted by this policy can continue to accept reservations for listings located elsewhere.

After applying our framework, Airbnb determined that listings would continue to be available in all of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. We are proud to have a thriving host community in these areas and remain committed to helping guests visit these communities.

Airbnb's policy now aligns Airbnb's presence in this region with that of U.S. multinational hotels and follows on the company's prior actions to stop allowing reservations in other parts of the world with unique dynamics, including Crimea (where Airbnb stopped allowing reservations in more than 4000 listings).

4. **Airbnb continues to apply its global framework to disputed territories around the world.**

Applying this same global framework, Airbnb has also decided to not allow reservations in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, disputed territories in the Caucasus where Airbnb has roughly 1300 listings. Pursuant to application of the company's global framework for disputed territories, Airbnb had concerns that because homes -- the core of the Airbnb business -- are a central element of the dispute among stakeholders in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Airbnb's listings could be implicated in ongoing tensions. In applying the global framework to these disputed territories, Airbnb determined that the existence of the listings in these

disputed territories has a direct connection to the larger conflict in the region. Therefore, Airbnb concluded that we should remove listings in these territories.

Airbnb is applying the company's global framework for disputed territories in an ongoing manner around the world. Airbnb also recognizes that the world is dynamic and situations can and will evolve that will likely necessitate ongoing work through the application of the global framework.

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This is a difficult issue and Airbnb knows that some people may disagree with this decision and the company appreciates their perspective. The company is open to conversations about the topic and continues to engage and meet with those who have a different perspective. At the same time, it is important for the Florida State Board of Administration to know that Airbnb categorically rejects the BDS movement, and will continue to invest to support travel and tourism to Israel.

Airbnb values its relationship with the State of Florida and the Airbnb community in Florida. Over 930,000 Floridians are Airbnb users – whether as hosts or guests. Per a recent economic impact report (exhibit 4), Airbnb facilitates a robust economic impact for over 45,000 hosts and homeowners throughout Florida. In 2018, Floridians earned a combined \$810 million in supplemental income through opening up their homes to 4.5 million guests from nearly every country in the world -- including the State of Israel. And when called upon by state officials at the Florida Department of Emergency Management, Airbnb has been honored to be in a position to facilitate free housing for thousands of vulnerable Floridians in times of need through the company's Open Homes program (exhibit 5). We have activated this program in partnership with state officials in the wake of Hurricanes Michael, Matthew and Irma as well as the tragic shootings at Pulse, Parkland and Fort Lauderdale Airport.

Airbnb appreciates this dialogue and the opportunity to discuss any future questions that you may have.

Sincerely,



Robert Chesnut  
General Counsel, Airbnb, Inc.

# **EXHIBIT 1**

## **Airbnb Statement Rejecting BDS Movement**

<https://press.airbnb.com/listings-in-disputed-regions/> and our statement from December 17 reads:

**“Airbnb expressed its unequivocal rejection of the BDS movement and communicated its commitment to develop its business in Israel, enabling more tourists from around the world to enjoy the wonders of the country and its people. We are here to meet with a variety of stakeholders and as a result of our meetings have an even deeper understanding that this is an incredibly complex and emotional issue. Airbnb communicated that we are developing the tools needed to implement our policy and that process includes continuing our dialogue with the Government of Israel and other stakeholders.”**

## **EXHIBIT 2**

### **Public reporting on Airbnb's rejection of BDS movement**

**[The BDS Movement Just Issued More Fake News](#)**

**[Israel Nation News: Samaria Council head meets with Airbnb VP in Samaria](#)**

**[Jewish Journal: West Hollywood City Council Tables Resolution Condemning Airbnb](#)**

# The BDS Movement Just Issued More Fake News

The claim that HSBC divested its holding in Elbit in support of Palestinian rights doesn't stand up to the bank's own statement

[David Rosenberg](#) Jan 03, 2019 2:32 PM



Elbit's Hermes drone on display Brent Lewin/Bloomberg

For a little while this week, I was beginning to wonder if BDS' moment had arrived and that Israel would start suffering a wave of corporate boycotts and divestments.

It was a little hard to believe because Israel hasn't done anything particularly egregious lately that would have aroused global public opinion.

But big corporations are increasingly being [called onto to the political carpet](#) and in the age social media, they risk being caught up in a PR nightmare when they do something wrong. You can't ignore the uproar, so when it comes to issues that aren't business critical, it makes more sense to back down than to fight.

Airbnb's decision to stop listing apartments and rooms for rent in West Bank settlements was a case in point. There were only about 200 listings – a tiny number even relative to the Israeli market, much less the global one, so the company's decision isn't going to exert any economic pressure on Israel or even on the settlements.

It wasn't a moral victory for the BDS movement either because Airbnb [refused to call its action a boycott](#) of the settlements but a decision not to entangle itself in a divisive political dispute. A top Airbnb executive [visited Israel](#) shortly afterwards and even met with settler leaders. He said the company was sticking to its decision, but made clear it would continue doing business with Israel, including the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem.

Airbnb could be dissembling in order to avoid lawsuits or losing its much more significant business inside Israel, but for BDS to claim a moral victory it would have had to get the company on board as a supporter of Palestinian rights. It didn't, although you wouldn't know that from the BDS propaganda.

Last week the BDS propaganda machine was back at work. This time the movement claimed that HSBC, the world's seventh-largest bank, was divesting its holding in the Israeli arms maker Elbit Systems.

HSBC did divest its holding in Elbit. But it wasn't under the circumstances or for the reason that BDS implied.

**Not 'because'**

To the movement's credit (or maybe because of the Christmas/New Year's holiday), BDS [hasn't said anything about Elbit](#). But an ally organization called War on Want was [crowing](#): "HSBC confirmed to campaigners that it has fully divested from Israeli drone manufacturer Elbit Systems, which sells weapons to the Israeli military used in attacks on Palestinians."

Now, read that sentence carefully. Note in particular the word "which" that follows Elbit Systems and observe that it isn't "because."

That could be just careless writing, or it could be because War on Want knows the Palestinian issue wasn't why HSBC divested from Elbit. But, what the hell, let's take credit for it – we campaigned hard.

In fact, HSBC said in an email to me from Stuart Levey, HSBC's chief legal officer and group managing director, that, "Our asset management business divested from Elbit based on our stated defense policy with respect to cluster munitions, not in response to any campaign."

The reason for the divestment was because Elbit produces cluster munitions. Other arms makers, including those in the U.S., have been affected by the same policy. As Levey notes, HSBC has a banking operation in Israel.

In any case, the value of the shares it sold was \$600,000, which is 0.01% of Elbit's issued share capital. So, just like with Airbnb, there's no economic impact and no moral statement either, at least vis-à-vis Israel and the occupation.

It could be that HSBC is being coy and simply wants to rid itself of demonstrations in front of its bank branches. But it's not a moral victory for BDS if the bank denies that it acted for the stake of Palestinian rights.

That hasn't stopped the BDS movement and its friends from declaring "victory" without asking too many questions about what really happened. The claim may not be true, but it will inspire activists to keep their work and live with the myth that the struggle is moving from one [great achievement](#) to the next.

The real issue is why anyone else should believe it. The Israeli government pretends to because it buttresses the right's worldview of an Israel beset by enemies in the West bent on its slow destruction.

The claim is so ridiculous that it seems a waste of words to point out that, for example, the supposedly Israel-loathing European Union is our [biggest trading partner](#), gives Israeli products duty-free entry, allows us - to our immense advantage - to participate in science programs like Horizon 2020 and sends hundreds of thousands of tourists here.

What the EU doesn't like is settlements. But, in an echo of the same kind of convoluted moral equations the BDS movement uses to turn anyone who does business with Israel into a Nazi, the right employs the logic that if you oppose settlements, you oppose Israel's existence and that makes you an anti-Semite.

In an era when everyone is entitled to their own truth, right-wing voters buy the Israel-hating worldview as a fact. It happily gives them and the government carte blanche to ignore any and all criticism of Israel on the grounds that it's all motivated by anti-Semitism.

There aren't many BDS supporters in Israel, but Gilad Erdan's Strategic Affairs Ministry spent 17% of its anti-BDS marketing budget in Israel in 2017 anyhow. That says a lot about whom the anti-BDS campaign is really for. Israelis on the left or right shouldn't buy this propaganda any more than BDS supporters buy their movement's. It's all smoke and mirrors.

# Samaria Council head meets with Airbnb VP in Samaria

Samaria Council head Yossi Dagan hosts Airbnb Vice President Chris Lahnman in Samaria. 'Important step against the boycott.'

Samaria Council head Yossi Dagan today hosted Airbnb Vice President Chris Lahnman in Samaria for a tour of the Barkan Industrial Zone.

"Mr. Lahan toured with me at the Alon factory where the terror attack in which Kim Yehezkel and Ziv Hajavi were murdered and we also introduced them to tourism in Samaria," Dagan said.

"The Vice President was very impressed by the coexistence in the factories in the Barkan industrial zone and the factories' activity against the BDS movement. I was very pleased to hear from Airbnb's senior staff about their stand against the BDS organization," he said.

"I briefed the Airbnb team on tourism activities throughout the Shomron Regional Council.

"I said during the tour to Airbnb that I'm happy about the dialogue they're conducting with the Israeli government and I expect them to retract the decision they made and to act in Judea and Samaria just as they operate in the entire State of Israel.

"I was pleased to hear that they opposed the boycott movement. We also agreed that they would consider my request and the dialogue would continue. We'll continue to work for Samaria and against BDS on all levels,"

Dagan said.

**More Arutz Sheva videos:**

# West Hollywood City Council Tables Resolution Condemning Airbnb

The West Hollywood City Council tabled a proposed resolution condemning Airbnb for de-listing Israeli homes in Judea and Samaria after public commenters spoke out against the resolution.

In a Dec. 12 memo to the city council, City Council Members Lindsey Horvath and Lauren Meister argued that Airbnb was singling out Israel, yet they aren't withdrawing from other disputed territories such as Northern Cyprus.

But at the Dec. 17 city council meeting, Horvath announced that the resolution was being tabled.

"We received correspondence from representatives from Airbnb that indicated their opposition to the BDS [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions] movement and their intent behind what this policy was and what their changes are," Horvath said. "I think therefore their clarification requires consideration before we take any sort of action."

Before Horvath's announcement, several people criticized the resolution during the public comments section, including Jewish Voice for Peace – Los Angeles founder Estee Chandler.

"I find the resolution to admonish Airbnb to be completely counter from the history of West Hollywood, known to be supporting equality," Chandler said. "But in the last week, it seems that some members from the West Hollywood City Council have sent out a message loud and clear that they believe for equality except for Palestinians."

Chandler argued that it was “interesting” that the city council never admonished Saudi Arabian Prince Mohammed bin Salman despite requests to do so yet they’re condemning Airbnb for “being compliant with international law.”

**City Council Meeting - Dec. 17, 2018**



Horvath told the Journal in an email that she and Meister decided to table the resolution because Airbnb’s “stated opposition to BDS was news to us, and suggests their policy may continue to evolve, which is worth considering before taking any further action.” The resolution was still on the agenda because they wanted to hear what the people thought of it.

Roz Rothstein, CEO and co-founder of StandWithUs, told the Journal in an emailed statement, “Airbnb’s discrimination deserves widespread condemnation, so we appreciate the WeHo City Council for bringing this

legislation forward. We understand that they need to table the resolution until there is full clarity about whether or not Airbnb will be implementing its shameful decision."

"Airbnb has created confusion by releasing contradictory statements about the status of this issue, but what is clear is that they should be held accountable unless they fully rescind their discriminatory policy," Rothstein added.

On Monday, it was reported in Israeli media that Airbnb was canceling its Judea and Samaria policy; Airbnb later stated that such reports were "inaccurate."

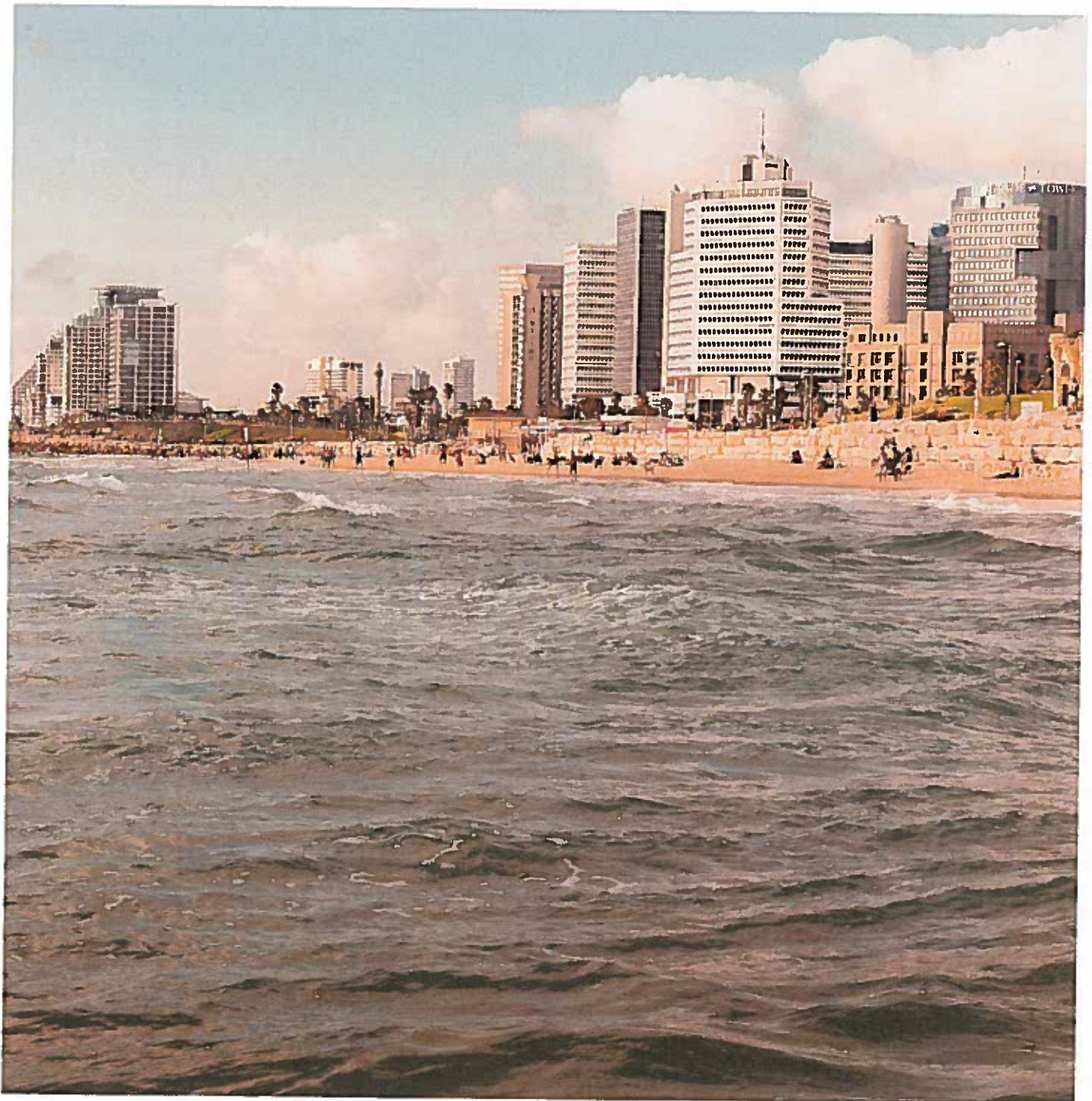
H/T: WEHOville

## **EXHIBIT 3**

### **Israel Economic Impact Report**



# Airbnb and Israel





## **Our community of hosts in Israel has helped welcome over 1 million visitors from around the world.**

These hospitable hosts are helping travellers experience the region like a local, understand more about the history of the country and participate in the culture. Airbnb is proud to be a platform that helps guests from around the world visit the region while simultaneously giving hosts access to new economic opportunities.

Since Airbnb began supporting Israeli hosts and guests in the region in 2009, over 1 million guests have travelled to Israel using Airbnb.

Roughly 80% of these visitors hail from outside the country, with the remaining 20% of guests being locals who use Airbnb when visiting other parts of the country.

## **Over the last 12 months, 22,000 listings were booked in Israel and a typical host made over 10,000 NIS.**

This report offers more details on the Airbnb community in Israel between November 2017 and November 2018.



## Host Profile

Airbnb hosts in Israel have been welcoming guests into their homes since 2009. Most hosts rent their homes occasionally throughout the year while earning supplemental income that can help them make ends meet.

**22,400**

Active hosts

**3,600**

Superhosts (11%)

**41**

Average host age

**4.5**

Nights: average trip length

**47%**

Female hosts

**28**

Nights hosted per year for a typical listing

**4.7**

Average host rating given by guests (out of 5 stars)

**10K NIS**

Typical host earnings

**400M NIS**

Total host earnings

Note: Except where noted, the statistics in this report capture November 2017 - November 2018.



## Guest Profile

Responsible home sharing is a new engine for tourism and the Israeli economy. The Airbnb platform grows the tourism pie, attracting many guests who might otherwise not have come, or been able to stay as long. Airbnb is also revolutionizing the way travellers experience destinations.

**530,000**

Inbound guest arrivals to Israel

**949,100**

Total nights booked

**210,000**

Total trips (includes domestic and international travel)

**81%**

Airbnb guests who are from another country

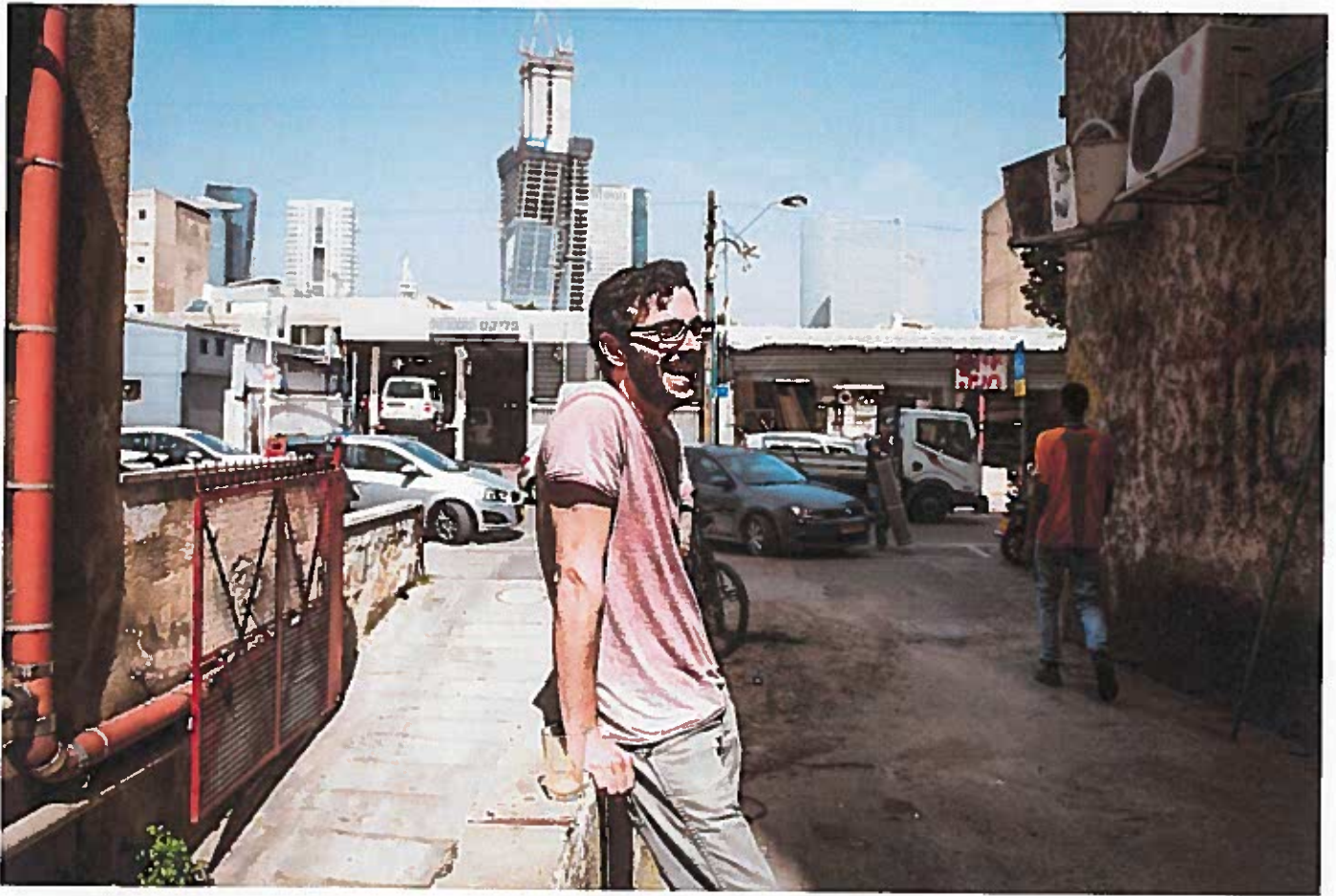
**52%**

YoY growth of inbound guest arrivals

**519,200**

Total outbound guests from Israel

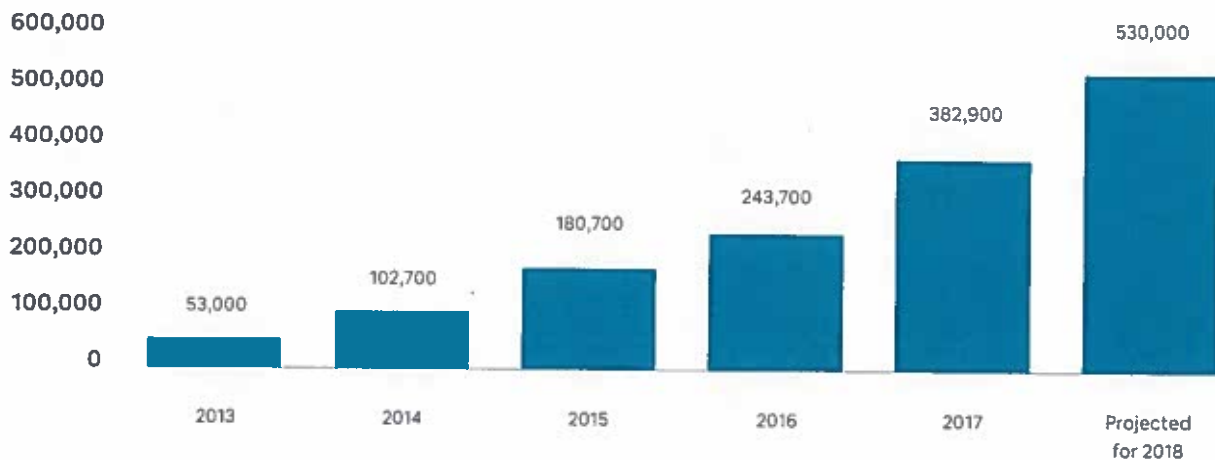
Note: Except where noted, the statistics in this report capture November 2017 - November 2018.



# Inbound Guest Growth

## 1,493,000

Total inbound guest growth  
2013 - 2018 (projected)



Note: Except where noted, the statistics in this report capture November 2017 - November 2018.



# Travelling to and from Israel

## Travellers to Israel: Top 6 origin countries



## Travellers from Israel: Top 6 destination countries



# About Airbnb In Israel

**Since 2009, over 1 million guests have travelled to Israel using Airbnb**

Around 80% of visitors travel from outside Israel - and 20% of guests are domestic.

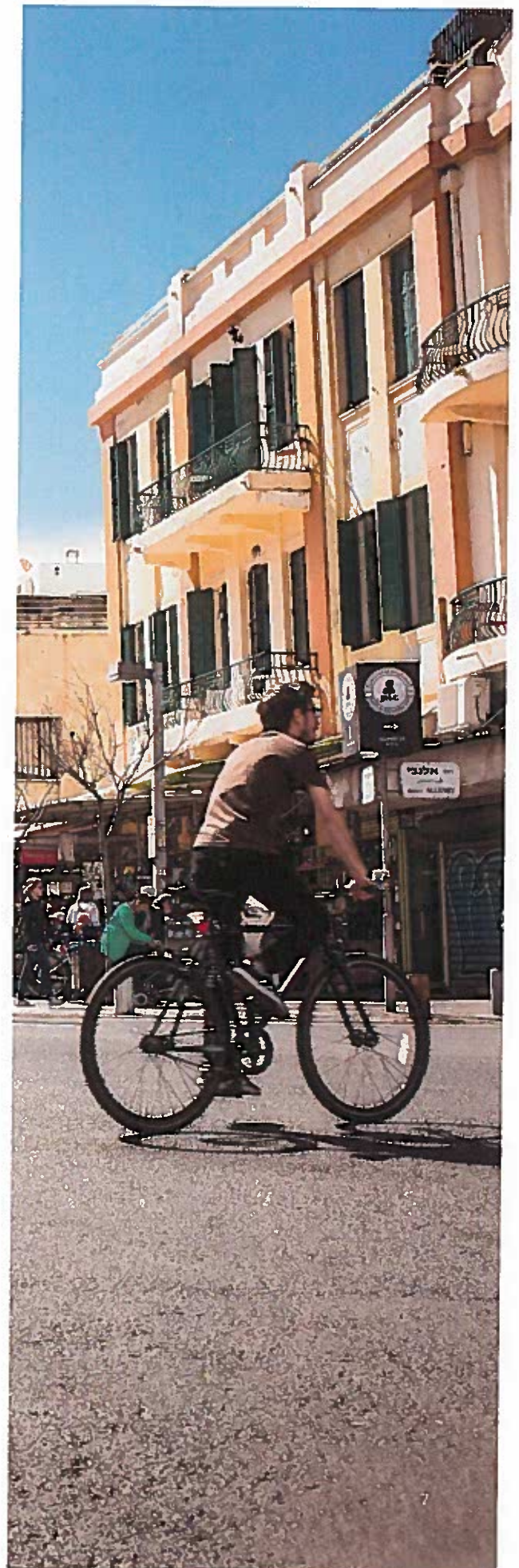
**Over the last 12 months, 22,000 listings were booked in Israel and a typical host made over 10,000 NIS**

Up to 97% of the price a host charges for their listing stays with the host.

**The top international destinations for outbound Israeli guests are Italy, the US, France, Spain and Greece.**

The top origin countries from overseas are the United States, Germany, France and the United Kingdom.

Note: Except where noted, the statistics in this report capture November 2017 - November 2018.





# **EXHIBIT 4**

## **Florida Economic Impact Report**

# Florida Airbnb Hosts Earned \$810 Million in 2018 Amid Continued Hotel Growth

January 15th, 2019

Airbnb announced today that Floridian hosts and homeowners earned a combined **\$810 million in supplemental income** while welcoming approximately **4.5 million guest arrivals** to the state in 2018 through the platform.

This comes as Floridian homeowners increasingly embrace the home sharing and vacation rental platform as an opportunity to earn supplemental income and make ends meet. There are now over **45,000 Floridian hosts** who share their homes via Airbnb, typically earning about **\$6,500 annually in supplemental income**.

Yet, statewide data indicates that Airbnb and its host community **appear to be complementing — rather than competing with — the Florida hotel industry**. The most recent state-commissioned report demonstrates that [Florida hotel occupancy rates, daily prices and revenue have grown steadily](#) even as local hosts welcomed millions of guests. This suggests that vacation rentals are opening up the state to a new slice of prospective tourists by catering to travelers less able to afford hotels, those who desire to stay in neighborhoods or cities that lack hotels, and families who prefer to be together under one roof.

This most recent announcement comes on the heels of previous Airbnb reports documenting the disproportionately [positive impact of vacation rentals for Floridian senior hosts](#) as well as for [rural Florida counties that](#)

lack hotels. At this time, over 932,000 Floridians are Airbnb users (as either hosts or guests).

What follows is an overview of 2018 guest arrivals and total host income, broken down by counties where hosts earned over a combined \$1 million.

### 2018 Florida Host & Guest Data by County

County	2018 Total Host Income	2018 Total Guest Arrivals
Miami-Dade	\$204 million	954,000
Osceola	\$82.6 million	640,000
Broward	\$80.3 million	406,000
Pinellas	\$44.2 million	232,000
Orange	\$40 million	338,000
Palm Beach	\$30.6 million	126,000
Bay	\$27.3 million	136,000
Monroe	\$27.1 million	110,000
Lee	\$24.2 million	101,000
Sarasota	\$22.8 million	100,000
Polk	\$22.5 million	195,000
Walton	\$20.6 million	88,000
Hillsborough	\$20.5 million	157,000
Okaloosa	\$18.9 million	95,000
Saint Johns County	\$17.2 million	113,000
Collier	\$16.1 million	56,000
Volusia	\$14.6 million	91,000
Brevard	\$12.8 million	82,000
Manatee	\$12.4 million	49,000
Duval	\$11.6 million	83,000

Escambia	\$9.8 million	62,000
Lake	\$6.5 million	49,000
Alachua	\$4.6 million	39,000
Leon	\$3.7 million	28,000
Santa Rosa	\$3.5 million	23,500
Martin	\$2.8 million	12,500
Pasco	\$2.8 million	17,000
Seminole	\$2.7 million	22,000
Nassau	\$2.7 million	14,000
Charlotte	\$2.6 million	12,000
Flagler	\$2.6 million	17,000
St. Lucie	\$2.4 million	14,000
Indian River	\$1.9 million	8,900
Citrus	\$1.6 million	13,000
Marion	\$1.3 million	9,900
Sumter	\$1.3 million	6,500
Franklin	\$1.2 million	6,700
Hernando	\$1.2 million	11,000
Gulf	\$1.2 million	4,900

## **EXHIBIT 5**

### **Open Homes in Florida**

**Miami Herald: [Airbnb homes in north Florida and Georgia welcoming Irma evacuees — for free](#)**

**ABC News: [Airbnb Offering Rentals for \\$0 to Those Affected by Hurricane Matthew](#)**

**FloridaPolitics.com: [Airbnb extends disaster response for Hurricanes Irma, Maria](#)**

**USA Today: [Airbnb is offering free housing for Hurricane Michael evacuees and relief workers](#)**

# Airbnb homes in north Florida and Georgia welcoming Irma evacuees — for free



Hundreds of thousands of evacuees fleeing Miami-Dade and Broward counties ahead of Hurricane Irma can now stay at Airbnb properties across northern Florida and Georgia — for free.

The popular home-sharing platform activated its [Disaster Response Program](#) Thursday as evacuations began in Miami-Dade and Broward. The program offers a tool that helps residents displaced by Irma, or emergency relief workers and volunteers arriving in the state, find a temporary place to stay with local Airbnb hosts.

The listings will be available for the next three weeks, until Sept. 28. In

addition to free listings, service fees and state and local taxes are also waived.

Prospective guests can look for accommodations and Airbnb hosts can offer to welcome evacuees [here](#).

As of Friday afternoon, only a handful of homes were available for rent, but more hosts could join the program as the week goes on.

As of Thursday afternoon, all available homes were already booked, but more hosts may join the program as the week goes on.

Evacuees can look for lodging in the following Florida counties: Bay, Escambia, Leon, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton, Holmes, Washington, Calhoun, Franklin, Jackson, Liberty, Gadsden, Gulf, Wakulla, Madison, Jefferson and Taylor. In Georgia, hosts in the greater Atlanta metropolitan area, Decatur, Grady and Thomas counties can participate in the program.

The disaster strategy is developed in coordination with local and state emergency management and disaster-relief officials, Airbnb said. As relief teams assess damage, Airbnb will continue to expand the reach of the program as necessary.

The platform has informed both hosts and users that the program is now active.

The disaster response program began in 2012 in the wake of Hurricane Sandy and has since been activated more than 75 times during natural disasters, including Hurricane Matthew in Florida in 2016 and Hurricane Harvey in Texas last month, where it is currently still active.

Florida counties in Airbnb's program: Bay, Escambia, Leon, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton, Holmes, Washington, Calhoun, Franklin, Jackson, Liberty,

Gadsden, Gulf, Wakulla, Madison, Jefferson and Taylor.

“We are hopeful that our host community will be able to help make the evacuation process easier for residents and their families,” Kim Rubey, Airbnb’s global director of social good, said in a statement.

As of Thursday afternoon, evacuations had begun for residents in zones A, B, and C in Miami-Dade County — [the largest evacuation in the county’s history](#) — affecting about 650,000 residents. In Broward County, the [evacuation orders](#) affect those who live east of U.S. Route 1 (Federal Highway), as well as all mobile home residents.

# Airbnb Offering Rentals for \$0 to Those Affected by Hurricane Matthew - ABC News

As Hurricane Matthew hits the Florida coast this morning, bringing with it powerful winds strong enough to knock out power for thousands of residents and causing millions of others to evacuate, Airbnb is hoping to come to the aid of those affected by the storm.

The rent-a-room company activated its Disaster Response Program Thursday that allows willing participants to "open their doors to those in need or find emergency accommodations," according to the [program's website](#).

Hurricane Matthew was downgraded to a Category 3 hurricane with 120 mph winds at 2 a.m. ET today.

## [Hurricane Matthew Lashes Florida With 100 MPH Winds](#) [Some Coastal Residents Staying Put as Hurricane Matthew Heads Toward Southeast US](#)

As of today, the program is activated in parts of Florida, South Carolina and Georgia. That means more than 3,000 homes are available to those in need for \$0.

Any type of accommodation is offered currently on the website from a ["comfy couch"](#) in Orlando to an [entire villa](#) in Davenport, Florida.

Airbnb spokesman Nick Shapiro in a statement to ABC News added, "We encourage hosts in safe, inland areas to aid in this effort by listing their

available rooms or homes on the platform to help the growing number of evacuees. This is the first major hurricane threat this area has seen in years, and we are hopeful that Airbnb can help play a small part in making the evacuation process easier for residents and their families. Our thoughts continue to be with everyone impacted by the storm, and we thank the dedicated government and emergency response personnel who are keeping our communities safe."

Airbnb's Disaster Response Program was created after Hurricane Sandy hit the New York area in 2012. More than 1,000 Airbnb hosts in New York opened their homes free of charge.

# Airbnb extends disaster response for Hurricanes Irma, Maria

By [Scott Powers](#) September 29, 2017

Airbnb, the nation's largest vacation rental home marketing business, announced Friday it is extending its Disaster Response Program two more weeks in Florida to help with displaced evacuees and relief workers from Hurricane Irma and evacuees from Hurricane Maria.

The company and a few of its host properties have agreed to offer rent-free stays for the evacuees or relief workers, dating to the Sept. 10-11 Hurricane Irma that ravaged almost all of Florida, followed by Hurricane Maria which devastated the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. The program was to expire Friday but will continue through Oct. 12, Airbnb announced.

Airbnb made the decision in consultation with Florida disaster management officials, who determined the extension was helpful in facilitating continued housing for those who cannot yet return to their homes due to the impact of Hurricane Irma. The program is also available to emergency relief officials as well as Puerto Rico natives who have evacuated to Florida following Hurricane Maria.

To this point, more than 230 hosts have opted into the program to list their homes for free to those in need in response to Hurricane Irma, Airbnb reported.



2,000 MEDICAL RESIDENTS BY 2020

# Airbnb is offering free housing for Hurricane Michael evacuees and relief workers

[Sara M Moniuszko](#) Updated 10:19 a.m. ET Oct. 10, 2018

[Airbnb](#) is opening its doors for those affected by impending storm Hurricane Michael, which is set to [hit the Florida Panhandle](#) by Wednesday afternoon.

The short-term rental company announced Tuesday that homes in Florida, Georgia and Alabama will host guests for free from Oct. 8 to 29.

The [website](#) specifies the free housing is available for "displaced neighbors" and "relief workers deployed to help."

Over 100 hosts have opened up their homes to take in guests for free, and the website encourages others to join who are able to help.

Though the program lasts until Oct. 29, hosts are able to set their availability.

The Category 4 storm is expected to be "[potentially catastrophic](#)" and is the strongest storm ever to hit the state's exposed Panhandle.

**Tracker:** [Follow Hurricane Michael's path](#)

Florida Gov. Rick Scott said at a news conference Wednesday that it was too late for people in the immediate path of the storm to flee.

This isn't the first time Airbnb has activated a free housing program for

hurricane relief. The company also lined up [free housing for Hurricane Irma evacuees](#) in September 2017.

USA TODAY has reached out to Airbnb for comment.

**More:** [This couple endured a nightmare Airbnb experience in Los Angeles](#)

**More:** [Boo! Haunted places you can actually rent on Airbnb](#)



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