

Israel announces thousands of new settler units in West Bank



Ramallah, August 1 (RHC)-- Israel has reportedly approved plans for the construction of 6,000 new settler units in the occupied West Bank, in flagrant defiance of international outcry over the Tel Aviv regime's settlement expansion policies in the Palestinian territories.

Israeli officials said on Wednesday Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet had approved permits for 6,000 new units for settlers in the so-called Area C of the West Bank. The area is the largest division in the occupied territory as it comprises 60 percent of the land, and is under full Israeli military control.

The Palestinian leadership rejected the construction announcement, with the Palestinian Foreign Ministry calling it "evidence of the dark colonial mentality of the rules in Israel and which ignores all United Nations resolutions, international law and the signed agreements."

The announcement came ahead of a visit by President Donald Trump's Middle East envoy and son-in-law Jared Kushner to Israel as part of a regional tour. The U.S. last month held a conference in Bahrain, during which it unveiled economic part of Trump's "Deal of the Century." That event was boycotted by the Palestinians and all supporters of the Palestinian cause.

The U.S. claims the plan is aimed at settling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Recent revelations say under Trump's deal, the settlement blocs in the West Bank — which are illegal under international law and UN Security Council Resolution 2334 — will remain under the Israeli regime's control and will expand to reach out to other isolated settlements.

The Palestinian leadership has rejected U.S. diplomacy, saying the Trump administration is biased towards Israel. Netanyahu says Israel will keep the settlements it has built on the occupied Palestinian territories under any deal with Palestine.

About 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 illegal settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds. Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital.

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