

Israel approves plan for building four new settlement projects



Ramallah, December 7 (RHC)-- The Israeli regime has approved four new settlement projects in the occupied West Bank, and is planning construction of 9,000 settlement units north of Jerusalem al-Quds, Palestinian and Israeli media report.

On Sunday, Israeli Transportation Minister Miri Regev approved the four new settlement projects in the occupied West Bank. According to Palestine's Ma'an news agency, which quoted Israel's Channel 11, the Planning and Building Committee of the Jerusalem al-Quds Municipality has also begun the process of approving the construction of 9,000 settlement housing units in Atarot settlement, north of Jerusalem al-Quds.

Thousands of new settlement units will be built, according to the sources, near the abandoned Jerusalem International Airport (Qalandia), whose lands were occupied in the early 1970s. The settlement expansion plan in Atarot was drawn up several years ago; however, it had been frozen on more than one occasion due to international political pressures rejecting the construction of illegal settlements in the

territories occupied in 1967.

The plan resurfaced in February when Israel's transport ministry approved a controversial proposal to extend a train line from Tel Aviv into the occupied Old City of East Jerusalem al-Quds. The anti-settlement monitoring group Peace Now warned at the time that the planned construction would drive "a wedge in the heart of the Palestinian urban continuity between Ramallah and East Jerusalem [al-Quds], thus preventing the establishment of a viable Palestinian state with its capital in East Jerusalem [al-Quds]."

Peace now added that the plan "also includes the demolition of dozens of Palestinian residential units" that were built in the area throughout the years.

Under a so-called Middle East peace plan unveiled by U.S. President Donald Trump earlier this year, Israel will have sovereignty over all of al-Quds as well as settlements in the occupied territories.

Palestinians have rejected the plan as a conspiracy since they demand east Jerusalem al-Quds as the capital of their state, and many believe the settlement expansion is aimed at surrounding the Palestinian capital.

More than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds.

Emboldened by U.S. President Donald Trump's all-out support, Israel has stepped up its settlement construction activities in defiance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334, which pronounced settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds "a flagrant violation under international law." Most of the international community regards the Israeli settler units in the occupied lands as illegal.

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