

# *Israel endorses construction of hundreds of new settler units in occupied West Bank*

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Tel Aviv, May 27 (RHC)-- Israeli authorities have approved plans for the construction of hundreds of new settler units in the occupied West Bank, irrespective of the international outcry against the Tel Aviv regime's illegal settlement expansion activities and land grab policies in Palestinian territories.

Head of the Committee Against the Wall and Settlements in Bethlehem Hassan Bureijja told Palestine's official Wafa news agency on Thursday that officials have given the green light for plans to build 560 units in Mtsad settlement, which lies southeast of Bethlehem and more than 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) south of Jerusalem al-Quds.

He added that the announcement came only a few days after Israeli authorities endorsed plans for the construction of 90 new illegal units in Ibi Hanahal settlement. Bureijia emphasized that the uptick in Israel's settlement expansion activities is clearly aimed at expropriation of Palestinian lands in the southeastern flank of the West Bank in order to link settlements together.

Emboldened by former US president Donald Trump's all-out support, Israel has stepped up its illegal 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."

Much of the international community regards the Israeli settler units in the occupied lands as illegal.

More than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds. All Israeli settlements are illegal under international law. The UN Security Council has condemned Israel's settlement activities in the occupied territories in several resolutions.

Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent state with East Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital. Palestine condemns a decision by Israel to construct 2,166 new settler units across the West Bank, saying the project shows that the Tel Aviv regime is still implementing its illegal occupation scheme.

The last round of Israeli-Palestinian talks collapsed in 2014. Among the major sticking points in those negotiations was Israel's continued illegal settlement expansion.

Many Palestinians believe the Israeli plans to annex one-third of the already illegally occupied West Bank, including parts of the strategic Jordan Valley, is only a formality and a de facto Israeli occupation of their land has been under way for many years.

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