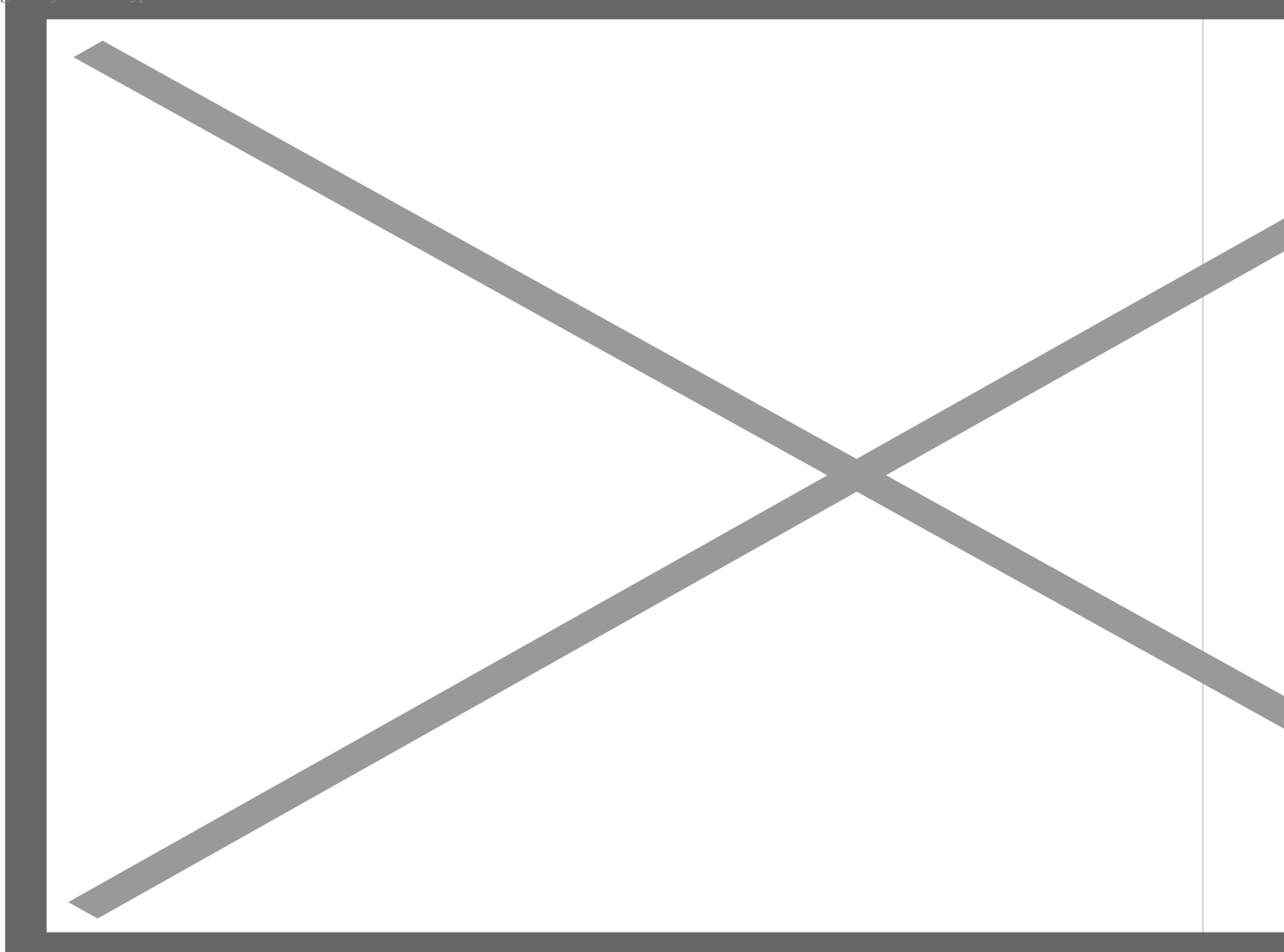


Israel plans to seize large areas of Palestinian land to build illegal settlements

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Israeli soldiers stand by as masked Israeli settlers throw stones at Palestinian protesters (unseen) during a demonstration against construction on an Israeli outpost near the Palestinian

village of Turmusaya north of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank. (Photo by AFP)

Ramallah, August 2 (RHC)-- Israeli authorities are plotting to confiscate more Palestinian land to expand settlements in the occupied al-Quds, as the Tel Aviv regime presses ahead with its land grab policies in the occupied territories.

Abdullah Seyam, the Palestinian Authority's Deputy Governor of al-Quds said that the Israeli projects in al-Quds were part of a systematic plan to change the demography of the holy city and to Judaize it even more, Palestine's official Wafa news agency reported.

The official went on to say that the Tel Aviv regime was also desperately attempting to desecrate and block the view of the Islamic and Christian's holy religious sites. Seyam further said the Israeli authorities in recent months have enforced harsh measures such as demolition of homes and imposition of hefty taxes on residents in order to forcibly expel Palestinians from the region.

The land grab and evictions carried out by the Israeli authorities are seen as part of efforts to forcibly displace the Palestinians and change the demographic character of the occupied territories.

The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas in June urged the Arab and Islamic world to play their part in safeguarding the identity of al-Quds and al-Aqsa Mosque and standing decisively against the normalization of ties with the Israeli regime, which "emboldened it to defile the Aqsa Mosque and kill Gaza children."

Meanwhile, Israeli media quoting a local activist reported that Israeli settlers had recently accelerated the construction of illegal outposts in the unauthorized settlement of Kida, south of the West Bank city of Nablus.

Ghassan Daghlis, who monitors Israeli settlement activities in the northern West Bank, said hundreds of settler units were built inside and outside the settlement area over the past few weeks.

In 2016, the Israeli Supreme Court issued a verdict prohibiting the expropriation of more Palestinian residents' lands to expand the settlement in the region. However, settlers have continued to return and bulldoze more land in order to build luxury homes at the site.

Throughout the years, Israel has frequently demolished Palestinian homes, claiming that the structures have been built without permits, which are nearly impossible to obtain.

The Tel Aviv regime even orders the Palestinian owners to tear down their own homes or pay the demolition costs to the municipality. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) says Israeli authorities either demolish or seize Palestinian property in the West Bank and East al-Quds, a trend which has led to the displacement of a large number of Palestinians in recent months.

According to the OCHA recent report, Israel has demolished more than 420 Palestinian-owned structures in the West Bank so far this year.

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