

# *Hamas says Washington's support emboldening Israel to expand settlement activities*

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**IPalestinian houses are seen in the village of Wadi Fukin, as the illegal Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit is seen in the background in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. (Photo by Reuters)**

Gaza City, July 21 (RHC)-- The Palestinian resistance movement of Hamas has strongly denounced new Israeli plans to build more settlements in the occupied Palestinian lands, stressing that such criminal policies were the direct result of the US's unconditional support for the Tel Aviv regime.

Hamas said in a recent statement that Israel had endorsed plans to seize large swathes of Palestinian land to build 2,000 new settler units near Beit Safafa Town in occupied al-Quds. "The settlement expansion in al-Quds is a crime that reflects the American support for the occupation's projects and exposes the false claims of peace," the statement read.

Hamas further said that the resumption of Israel's settlement activities came against the backdrop of U.S. President Joe Biden's controversial trip to the occupied territories and West Asia. "The timing of this settlement project after U.S. President Biden's visit to the Zionist entity reveals once again the size of support and official cover being provided by the US administration for the enemy in its aggression against our land, people and holy sites."

Thousands of Palestinians are set to stage a protest rally in West Bank in a show of opposition to the Israeli occupation as US President Joe Biden is en route to the occupied territories.

Elsewhere in the statement, Hamas said that Israel's persistence in expanding settlements reflected "the dangerous nature of the Zionist project that is based on Judaizing the Palestinian land and displacing its people." It also described the plan as "another desperate and failed attempt to impose a demographic fait accompli and target the Palestinian people's rights and identity."

Palestinian media on Tuesday quoted the head of the Settlement and Wall Resistance Commission, Muayyad Shaaban, as revealing that the Israeli authorities had legalized the Mitzpe Dani settlement outpost east of the West Bank city of Ramallah and endorsed a plan to add 114 new settler units to it.

He said that the regime was planning to seize large pieces of land in the village of Deir Dibwan for settlement expansion activities in the area. Shaaban warned that the Israeli authorities were establishing new settlements, specifically in the eastern part of the occupied West Bank close to the Jordan Valley.

In recent months, Israel has been rapidly expanding settlements in contravention of international law. On July 12, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) said Israeli authorities had ramped up settlement expansion and demolition activities across the West Bank and East al-Quds in the first six months of the current year.

Between 600,000 and 750,000 Israelis live in over 250 settlements built since the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East al-Quds. Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent Palestinian state, with East al-Quds as its capital.

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