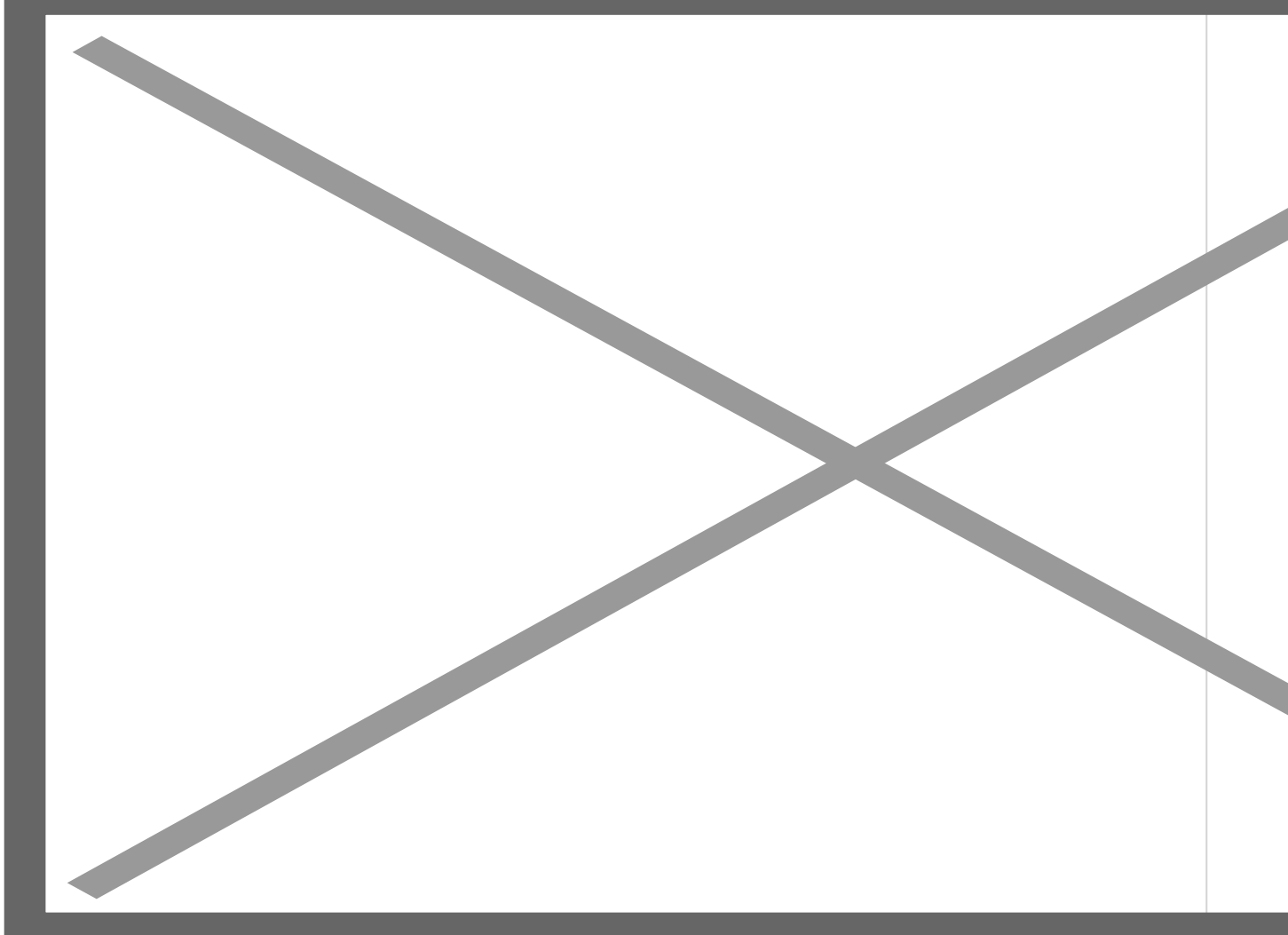


Israeli minister vows unabated continuation of regime's settlement activities

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File photo of the Israeli regime's illegal settlement complexes in the Tel Aviv-occupied West Bank

Tel Aviv, February 8 (RHC)-- A controversial Israeli regime minister from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's extreme-right cabinet vows that the regime's illegal settlement activities in the occupied West Bank will continue unabated.

"There will be no construction freeze in Judea and Samaria period," a statement from Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich's Religious Zionism party said on Tuesday, referring to the West Bank.

The remarks by Smotrich -- who has raised eyebrows before on many occasions through his incendiary remarks -- came less than a week after the UN announced that the regime had either demolished, forced owners to demolish or confiscated 88 Palestinian-owned structures throughout the occupied territory within an interval of about three weeks last month.

The report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Palestine offered the grim data in its biweekly Protection of Civilians report that covered the period between January 10 and 30.

More than three million Palestinians live in the West Bank, which has been occupied by the Israeli regime since 1967, when it waged a Western-backed war against Palestinians. Ever since the occupation, Tel Aviv has built hundreds of illegal settlements across the territory, which have come to house hundreds of thousands of Israeli settlers.

According to the latest figures, the population of Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank has surpassed half a million. According to a report, the population of Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank has surpassed 500,000.

Also earlier in the month, Israeli authorities approved plans for the construction of more than a thousand new settler units in the holy occupied city of al-Quds. The regime has scaled up implementing its illegal settlement expansion activities and land grab policies since late December, when Netanyahu staged a comeback as premier at the head of the cabinet that features hard-right and ultra-Orthodox parties.

As means of ensuring the political parties' partnership, he has pledged to execute their desired schemes, including fierce advancement of illegal settlements.

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