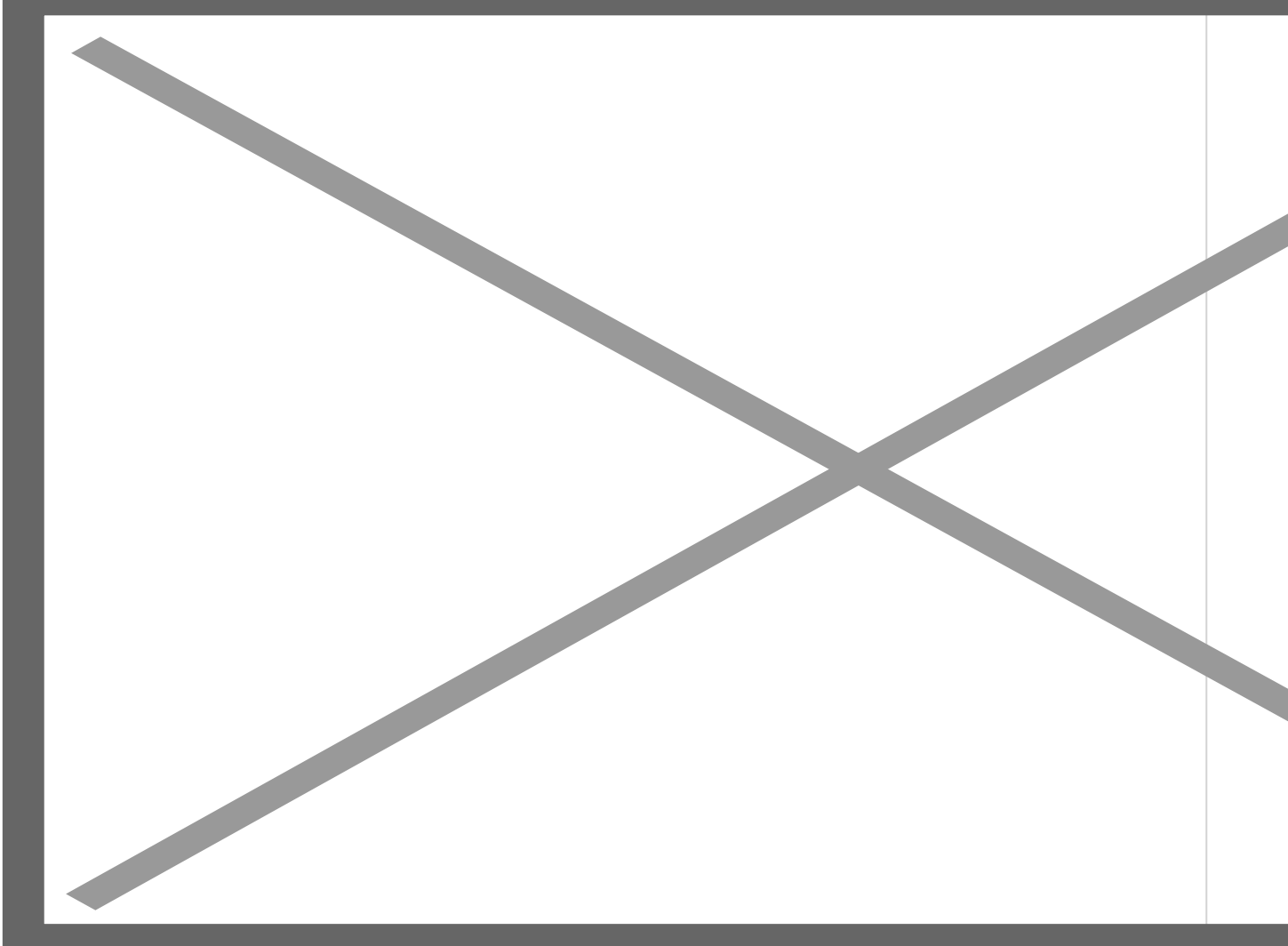


Report confirms record surge in Israeli settlement plans in West Bank

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This image shows Israeli forces demolishing Palestinian homes in the occupied West Bank to make way for Israeli settlements.

Tel Aviv, July 14 (RHC)-- The anti-settlement organization Peace Now says the far-right cabinet of prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has advanced a record number of illegal units in settlements in the occupied West Bank in the first six months of the current year.

In a statement on Thursday, the Israeli human rights group said that the Tel Aviv regime has advanced 12,855 settler housing units across the West Bank since January, and the number is the highest figure that it has recorded since it started tracking such activity in 2012.

“In the past six months, the only sector that Israel has vigorously promoted is the settlement enterprise,” it said in a statement. The news came on the same day that four Palestinians sustained injuries tonight, two of them seriously, in an attack by extremist Israeli settlers near the town of Kafr Thulth, located 28 kilometers (17 miles) south of Tulkarm.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa reported that a group of settlers from the illegal settlement of Karnie Shomron attacked the Palestinian Bedouin community of Arab al-Kholi, and pelted residents with stones, injuring four Palestinians. The settlers also set a stall on fire in the community.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health said the wounded Palestinians were admitted to the Qalqilya Public Hospital as a result of the assault. It said two Palestinians were in critical condition as they had suffered fractures in the skull and lacerations in the face.

More than 700,000 Israelis live in over 279 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East al-Quds. While all Israeli settlements are illegal under international law, the occupying regime has stepped up settlement expansion in blatant violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions.

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